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H. Lower.
Nov. 1887

NOCTES SHAKSPERIANÆ.



WINCHESTER: PRINTED BY WARREN AND SON, HIGH STREET.

Winchester College Shakspeare Society.

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NOCTES SHAKSPERIANÆ

*A SERIES OF PAPERS
BY LATE AND PRESENT MEMBERS*

EDITED BY

REV. CHARLES HALFORD HAWKINS, M.A.

President.

Published during the 25th Season of the Society.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is surely fair to suppose that this little work will shortly be in the hands of the majority of the old members of the Society, under whose auspices it is issued ; and that a brief account of the life and progress of the Club to its present maturity of a quarter of a century will not fail to be acceptable and to recall pleasant memories of a phase of School experience at Winchester.

In the winter of 1862, when I had not long entered on my mastership, it occurred to me that there was little or no encouragement for the study of English, and that the most agreeable method of reading the representative classic of our literature would probably be the most effective towards awakening an interest in others.

Shakspeare Societies were not so common in 1862 as they are in 1887 ; indeed the first School Society of the kind had been started originally by Bishop Cotton at Marlborough, and on the model of this our own was framed. Its constitution was simple, its rules were, as they are still, limited to two : the first twelve Seniors in the order of the Roll were *ex-officio* members, and the meetings were held on every Saturday evening from October to Easter in my little room in College Street.

In the following year the scheme was heartily taken up by John Desborough Walford (whose name must always awake affectionate regrets in the older generations of Wykehamists), and to his ampler premises the weekly conferences were transferred. One of my own chief biblical treasures is the Edition from which he always read ; and there lingers still in the pages of his *Hamlet* a note on the line, "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit," ironically appropriate to himself in the rôle of the Ghost, whose only answer to his exorciser, on a memorable occasion, was an airy but audible snore.

Still for many years the principle of membership remained the same ; even the names were unchronicled (a serious loss to us now) ; and the meetings were shrouded in a halo of mystery, visitors on no account being admitted, except on one or two occasions, when they gathered such fragments of Shaksperian lore as they might from the seclusion of darkness and an adjoining passage.

During this period no special training or preparation was attempted, though now and again singular excellence was attained, and the accents of Wilkinson and Streatfield, of Cosser and Dering, of Hill and Gatty, still haunt my ear as I write.

From the Shaksperian circle, however, issued most of the leading actors in the remarkable series of "Winchester Plays" given during the autumns of the years 1865 to 1868 in Commoner "Mugging Hall," and terminating with

the highest effort, *King Lear*, the appreciation of which by many competent witnesses, artistic and amateur, is an abiding satisfaction to those who directed and took part in it.

In 1869 the Society moved to their present "local habitation" in Southgate House, and its purpose and borders enlarged with the general broadening of scholastic ideals. The mystic number of twelve was no longer insisted on, members were *selected* from the range of Prefects and Sixth Book, and a few School visitors from the higher forms were admitted. Soon a choir, sometimes of equal, sometimes of mixed voices, was added; open nights and elaborated performances were attempted from time to time: finally, by careful preparation of some of the characters for ordinary nights, and of all for extraordinary, suitable dramatic expression and the elements of elocution were included in its "objects of study."

About fifteen years ago a new feature of popularity was introduced. Ladies were admitted as regular auditors by the earnest request of some who were anxious for personal culture. The circle of the initiated was, however, jealously limited; but it is impossible to say how much in the opinion of old members the enjoyment of the Saturday evenings was thereby enhanced; "for two hours in the week a few of the Seniors were practically removed into an entirely new atmosphere," and memories of home circles revived. It is a pleasant treat to look forward

and back to. Of course by the assistance of auditors the standard of reading and delineation was raised. On the other hand there arose a danger of the literary purpose being merged in a quasi-theatrical effect.

Many attempts to counteract this possibility were therefore from time to time essayed. Discussion was attempted, but usually degenerated into monologue, and was voted a bore. A Literary sub-section was added to the Society, but its vitality was precarious. Papers were written and read, and, being often original and vigorous, were successful, and are still customary on alternate nights. Various subjects for observation were assigned to different members and the results recorded. The boldest attempt of all has finally resulted in the publication of the present volume.

C. H. HAWKINS,

President W. C. S. S.

OCTOBER, 1887.

PREFACE TO THE ESSAYS.

WHEN, in 1883, the Society attained its majority, it seemed desirable that some permanent record of its literary aspirations should be attempted. The following subjects for careful enquiry were therefore proposed during several successive seasons :—

1. Real or apparent inaccuracies as to the facts of Geography, History and the like.
2. Allusions to contemporary events, customs, topics, and the like.
3. Hints towards the life, opinions, character, and tastes of Shakspeare himself.
4. Knowledge of stage management and effects.
5. Traces of Classical education and Literary attainments.
6. Actual quotations, including Biblical.
7. The employment of supernatural agencies. Whether prompted by genuine belief?

It was the intention to place the results obtained in the hands of competent writers, to be thereafter embodied in narrative and essay form.

A goodly number of past and present members undertook the collation of the plays ; and the following, amongst others, devoted special time and industry to those which

they selected:—Messrs. Leathes, Ritchie, Blackburn, Tracey, Williams, Booker, Ingram, Norris, MacLagan, Clarke, and de Burgh.¹

The promoters of the present more matured scheme avail themselves of this opportunity to thank all those who enthusiastically forwarded the former impracticable effort; but, indeed, when the harvest of their labours was garnered, it was found that by no possibility could it be threshed into profitable substance. Notes oftentimes excellent and suggestive were amorphous and unsuitable for editorial purposes. After two years of hunting on a false scent the quarry was run to ground by a few only of the many who started on the quest.

It will be seen that of the subjects previously proposed three only are now included in this volume. They are the work of members commissioned to formulate the investigations of others; but whatever may be valuable in their enquiries is now due to themselves alone.

The two first Essays are unquestionably the expression of genuine research, and are therefore put in the forefront of the work; and the third in present order takes precedence of the third survival of the original scheme by claim of originality and careful study. As to the rest, I am sure that I may express for the other writers, as for myself, that we arrogate no claim, to originality or

¹ The writers of the present Series of Essays were also contributors, as well as many other School members from 1883 to 1886. I wish to lay special emphasis on the *general* work undertaken by the Society, as it is precisely this which has been most valuable although apparently without record.

erudition ; we have done what we could, under pressure of constant occupation, tutorial or scholastic, leaving little leisure for enquiry or composition.

Two claims on the Wykehamical and Literary world we however venture to urge. The idea and enterprise is entirely Wykehamical, and entirely novel and bold. From Wykehamists, we expect kindliness and indulgence ; from any others, who do us the honour to run their eye over our lucubrations, a merciful remembrance of the circumstances of the venture and its authors.

If we hereby initiate something on which other School Literary Societies may improve, we shall have amply fulfilled our purpose. The veteran among the Public Schools of England challenges all others to the field of Letters. This is our gage :—

“A poor, an ill-favoured thing, sirs, but our own.”

In conclusion, we pray all readers, sympathetic or critical, fellow Schoolmen, or aliens,—

“Be to our faults a little blind ;
Be to our merits very kind.”

C. H. H.

I am requested by the writer of the second Essay to acknowledge his obligations to the writer of the first for allowing him to use his materials.

As far as has been possible different generations of the Society, from the earliest to the present, have been represented in the cycle of Essayists.

It is scarcely necessary to apologise for permitting the same variety in the spelling of the name of our Author as he and his contemporaries permitted to themselves. It was agreed that foot-notes should, as much as possible, be excluded from all contributions except the first two.

C. H. H.

SHAKESPEARE'S LIBRARY :

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION OF THE
DRAMATIST OTHER THAN CLASSICAL.

B

"Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me
From mine own library with volumes that
I prize above my dukedom."

Tempest, Act I, Sc. ii, ll. 166—168.

SHAKESPEARE'S LIBRARY.

WE have been reading a good deal lately about the Choice of Books ; and it is to be presumed that all who possess tender consciences are now learning to eschew "the garbage of the circulating library," and have undertaken a course of the best hundred authors, under the guidance of Sir John Lubbock, or Miss Braddon, or some other of the best hundred judges. A controversy which has sent even one grovelling soul back to his *Odyssey* cannot be counted a barren incident in the strife of tongues, and deserves the gratitude of the right-minded. But if we may distinguish degrees in our thankfulness to the censors of our literary manners, we shall be inclined to admit that we owe most to those who have told us not so much what we ought to read as what they read themselves. Example is better than precept. As a play or a novel is more popular than an essay in morals, and therefore more generally effective—for a boat is of no use on dry land—so it is more interesting and profitable to learn upon what literary diet men actually have thriven, than to have prescribed an ideal regimen of abstract excellence.

In a pleasant corner of that visionary library of the books that are waiting to be written stands a delightful little octavo, brimming with suggestiveness, upon the Favourite Books of Great Men. When this "*liber desideratus*" has found its way into the *Publishers' Circular*,

it will do more to destroy the taste for "garbage" than all the "*ἀγανὰ βέλεα*" of our far-darting Comtist. For books, as one has been reminded so often, have a kind of personal existence, and human nature cannot take to books, any more than it can make friends, from conscientious motives. A man who should try to model his friendships upon the academic essays of Aristotle and Cicero, would be, as we all feel, an intolerable prig; and we cannot think that a healthy nature would remain unimpaired after an imposed "course" of any authors, be they never so far the best. It is as true of a good book as of any other good thing that,—

"You must love it, ere to you
It will seem worthy of your love."

But, if we have any hero-worship in our souls, we cannot help being drawn towards those books which our particular heroes have loved and cherished, just as we are attracted by the very "corporeal mould" of any volume which they once handled. We know a lover of books and of Charles Lamb, who holds in peculiar reverence a slim volume, bound in boards, containing some album-verses of Elia, for no better reason than because the flyleaf comprises this legend, written in Lamb's fine handwriting,—

FROM CHARLES LAMB,
12 JULY, 1830,
H. N. COLERIDGE.

If the bare form and substance of books connected with great and honoured men have this sentimental charm, surely we must feel a more solid affection for the "insides" of their favourite volumes. It would doubtless be a good thing to possess that copy of Florio's translation of Montaigne which contains Shakespeare's autograph, or the

duplicate copy in the British Museum which belonged to rare Ben Jonson, and no wonder Mr. Andrew Lang is proud to own a Montaigne which bears upon its title-page the name and device of "Drummond of haunted Hawthornden"; yet, after all, the interesting and suggestive point about these treasures consists in their testimony that Drummond and Jonson and Shakespeare used to read the wise and witty Gascon. If the consideration of this fact does not instil an affection for Montaigne into the breasts of the indifferent, what will ennoble them? Alas! not all the ink of all the Barlows! For those who fail to appreciate the suggestiveness of this thought will never appreciate Montaigne.

But, apart from such rare relics of a great man's library, it is not always easy to discover what books he read and loved. What were Shakespeare's favourite books?—to come at once to the heart of the matter and to the subject of this essay.

The only book which we know from direct evidence to have been in Shakespeare's hands, is that same copy of Florio's Montaigne which contains his autograph, and even in this solitary case there is a doubt as to the genuineness of the signature. If we wish to re-construct, as far as possible, the poet's library, we must rely almost entirely upon circumstantial proof.

Moreover, as there is little or no external testimony concerning the literary likings of Shakespeare, we are compelled to look for this circumstantial proof in his own works. Quotations and allusions, scattered here and there throughout the plays,—

"rari nantes in gurgite vasto,"

these are almost the only guides which can help us, and the evidence which they offer is unfortunately most inconclusive and fragmentary.

It would be absurd to deduce any positive and dogmatic conclusions from these sparse hints and side-lights upon Shakespeare's reading. Nevertheless, it seemed at least a pleasant sort of idleness to attempt a provisional reconstruction of the library of our greatest poet. We cannot of course refill the bookshelves at New Place, for we have no means of knowing what books Shakespeare actually possessed : we can only hope to refurnish that ideal library, which is, after all, the only genuine one, containing the books which he made his own, not by buying, but by reading them.¹

The range of Shakespeare's literary acquirements may appear but narrow to the patrons of our prolific publishing establishments. The terribly rapid increase in the population of our bookstalls makes it difficult for us to realise how rare books were in the golden age of English literature. And of the comparatively few books which existed in England three centuries ago, Shakespeare certainly did not read a large proportion.

We may take for granted his love of literature, and assume that he read everything he could which he thought worth reading : but he was limited by two principal drawbacks—the difficulty of obtaining books, and his ignorance of foreign languages. The former hindrance chiefly affected the early years of his life at Stratford, when he could not have had many opportunities of reading anything except school books and books of devotion.

¹ "From the absence of all reference to books in the Will of 1616, it may be safely inferred that the poet himself was not the owner of many such luxuries. Anything like a private library, even of the smallest dimensions, was then of the rarest occurrence, and that Shakespeare ever owned one at any time of his life is exceedingly improbable."—J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, *Life of Shakespeare*, vol. i, p. 251.

"In a nuncupative Will that was made by Mr. Hall a few hours before he died, he gave Thomas Nash, the husband of his only child, his 'study of books.' As the Halls were Shakespeare's residuary legatees, there can hardly be a doubt that any volumes that had been possessed by the latter at Stratford-on-Avon were included in this bequest. It may also perhaps be assumed that there was a study at New Place in the time of the great dramatist."—*Ibid.*, loc. cit.

"Lilly's Grammar and a few classical works, chained to the desks of the Free School, were probably the only volumes of the kind to be found at Stratford-on-Avon. Exclusive of Bibles, Church Services, Psalters, and Education Manuals, there were certainly not more than two or three dozen books, if so many, in the whole town. The copy of the black-letter English History, so often depicted as well-thumbed by Shakespeare in his father's parlour, never existed out of the imagination."¹

The grammar and dilectus from which Shakespeare gathered his "small Latin" were the above-mentioned grammar, the syntax of which was written by Erasmus, and the *Sententiae Pueriles*. The other school books of Shakespeare are not known. There is a very doubtful allusion to the Arithmetic or Algebra published by Robert Record in 1557 under the title "The Whetstone of Wit" (a book interesting as the first which contains the now universal sign of equality), but there is no proof that it had been studied by Shakespeare.²

We may assume that the "gentle Will" also received due instruction from some of those "books for good manners" to which he refers in *As You Like It*.³ The treatise of Erasmus, *De Civilitate Morum Puerilium*, had been translated and printed in the year 1554 under the title, "A lytle Booke of good Manners for Chyldren, with interpritation into the vulgare Englysshe tongue," and Shakespeare may thus have learnt his manners, as well as his Latin Syntax, from the great Erasmus. Or he may have been taught out of another book published without date in black letter in the reign of Edward the Sixth, by Hugh Rhodes, and called "The Booke of Nurture, or

¹ J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, *Life of Shakespeare*, vol. i, p. 52.

² *As You Like It*, I, ii, 51.

³ *Id.*, V, iv, 83.

Schoole of Good Manners, for Men, Servants, and Children, with *Stans puer ad mensam*.”¹

Perhaps the “card or calendar of gentry” to which Osric compares Laertes, refers to the title of another manual of the same kind.²

We have said that Shakespeare’s reading was restricted by his ignorance of foreign languages. But the fact is disputed. Some German critics have formed an opinion that the common notion which credits the great Dramatist with little or no knowledge beyond that of his native tongue, is nothing less than a deliberate insult to Learning which has been promulgated by English students for the sole purpose of exalting their national hero. But it would seem that the academic spectacles of these professors have magnified the evidence for Shakespeare’s learning. There are few Shakesperian scholars, we think, who would subscribe to the opinion expressed by Karl Simrock, who says that “Shakespeare knew Latin currently; was not wholly unacquainted with Greek; and was fully versed in Italian (at the court of Queen Elizabeth this was unavoidable³); and of his knowledge of French, which was then a rarity, no one can doubt who has read his *Henry V*. We do not know how it was with Spanish, but it is probable that he understood this language also.”⁴

Life is too short for a recapitulation of the evidence in a case which has been already tried, and we need only add that “the English notion of Shakespeare’s ignorance” which Simrock and other critics have been “compelled to give up,”

¹ “*Stans puer ad mensam*” is a poem by John Lydgate on good manners at table, which inculcates, with naïve impartiality, the elements of morality and etiquette, as witness the following delicious couplet:—

“Nevyr at met be warre gynne no stryve,
Thi teth also ne pike not with thi knyff.”

² *Hamlet*, V, ii, 114.

³ Shakespeare was not a courtier.

⁴ *Shakespeare Society Papers*, 1850, p. 19. So too *Gervinus* (Eng. Edn.), 1883, p. 26.

must appear to an unbiased mind to command the amplest testimony, and indeed to be the only tenable view of the matter. And the "English notion" is this : that Shakespeare gained, during the course of his London life, a smattering of French and Italian phraseology, and may have learnt to read Italian ; but that there is no sufficient evidence of his having read any books in French or Spanish : that he knew Latin, if a junior schoolboy may be said to know Latin, but that there is no evidence, except Ben Jonson's well-known saying (which may have been misunderstood), that he knew any Greek.¹ At any rate, it will appear in the course of this and the following essays, that his knowledge of foreign literature, such as it was, was rarely if ever gained at first hand, but was almost invariably obtained by means of translations.

It was through the translation of a translation that Shakespeare made acquaintance with one of his favourite books, the *Lives of Plutarch*. And this seems to have been the only spot that was familiar to him, with the exception of Chapman's *Homer*, to which we shall refer hereafter, in all the compass of Greek literature.

There is much food for reflection in this strange fact that the greatest master of modern literature lived and died in ignorance of the crowning achievements of human culture. Is it your delight, Shakesperian reader, sometimes to hear the singer of sweet Colonus telling of the woes of Œdipus and the glory of Antigone ? Your rapture was denied to the creator of Cordelia and Lear. Do you love to linger by the plane tree, and brood with Plato over the eternal problems ? He who conceived Hamlet and Prospero

¹ Ben Jonson, who ought to have known, said that Shakespeare had "small Latin, and less Greek." This saying, unfortunately, is somewhat ambiguous. It may mean that Shakespeare had a slight knowledge of Latin, and a knowledge of Greek which was even slighter, or it may mean that his knowledge of Latin was so very small that it excelled only his knowledge of Greek, which was *nil*. The latter interpretation gives the saying more point, and seems the most probable.

was debarred from that sacred earth. Or does the ever-varying flow of the Aristophanic humour carry you upon waves of boisterous laughter into a fairy haven? Think that the maker of Falstaff and Bottom and Ariel never read the *Clouds* or the *Birds*! Verily there is scant "poetic justice" in the fates of men!

And yet there are compensations. Shakespeare possessed doubtless in this sphere the blessing which has been bestowed on the man of one book. With an undivided ardour he knew and loved his *Plutarch*. The extent and nature of his familiarity with this treasure-house of ancient manners will be considered in the following essay, in which the classical attainments of Shakespeare are more fully discussed.

With Latin literature Shakespeare was somewhat more familiar than with Greek. Perhaps the favourite classic songster of the Elizabethan age was "that most capricious poet, Ovid";¹ and, if we were to judge from frequency of quotation and allusion, we should conclude that he was also Shakespeare's favourite. But our conclusion would probably be wrong. It seems, improbable, in the nature of things, that one of the sturdiest of English souls should have set so high a value upon the twitterings of any cage-bird: and we have a piece of direct evidence on the point which is perhaps worth consideration. Ovid is the favourite poet of the pedant Holofernes,—

"Ovidius Naso was the man! and why Naso, but for smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention?"²

From which we might gather that Shakespeare thought, with many other people, that Ovid is a very good sort of poet—for a Holofernes. However this may be, it is certain that Shakespeare was well acquainted with the *Metamorphoses*. The *Epistles* and the *Art of Love* furnish him with one or two quotations, but the great majority of

¹ *As You Like It*, III, iii, 67.

² *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, ii, 120.

his Ovidian allusions refer to those mythological fairy tales, which chiefly attract the fancy. The popular version of the *Metamorphoses* by Arthur Golding, commended by Puttenham for its "learned and well-corrected verse,"¹ was published in Shakespeare's twelfth year, and probably came into his hands soon after his arrival in London. We may imagine what a delightful meal it provided for the hungry imagination of the country genius.

And here we may recollect that during the first five or six years of his London life, Shakespeare disappears from the historian's view. These years were, we may assume, his season of incubation, that sojourn in the wilderness which awaits all men of prophetic rank; when he would summon up "to the sessions of sweet silent thought," not the ways of destiny alone, but also the various projections of the human mind. It was within these years, before his period of production, as we may not unreasonably conclude, when he was comparatively free from other responsibilities, and after the world of men and books had become accessible, that he laid the foundations of his many-sided knowledge.

Another classical work which may have helped at this time with Golding's *Ovid* to enlarge his intellectual view, was Phaer's translation of the *Æneid*.

References have also been found in the plays of Shakespeare to passages in *Cicero*, *Horace*, *Lucretius*, *Statius*, *Seneca*, and *Persius*; but in most cases only the ingenuity of a commentator would discover them, and certainly they would not justify us in naming any of these classics among the poet's books.

But a translation of the First Book of *Pharsalia* by

¹ *Arte of Poesie*, p. 77 in Arber's reprint. Puttenham's criticisms are interesting because, coming in the infancy of the Gay Science, they probably reflect with some faithfulness the common opinions of his day.

Christopher Marlowe was published in the year 1600, through which, as we may safely infer from some passages in *Hamlet* and *Julius Cæsar*,¹ Shakespeare made the acquaintance of Lucan. And he may have read some Plautus.

Last, but not least, in the list of Latin writers known to Shakespeare, we may place the name of Pliny, with whom he was acquainted through the translation of Holland.

"Thou know'st the first time that we smell the air
We wawl and cry,"

says Lear, making use of a word which does not occur elsewhere in Shakespeare.² Now in the Proem to the Seventh Book of Holland's *Pliny* is the following passage :

"Man alone, poor wretch, nature hath laid all naked upon the bare earth, even on his birthday, to cry and wrangle presently from the very houre that he is born into the world."

This coincidence is almost sufficient to establish by itself the fact of Shakespeare's acquaintance with Holland, and there are other passages in the plays which confirm the suspicion.

Such, then, was the scanty parade of veterans who represented to Shakespeare the classic companies of Greece and Rome. A poor handful of translations, the *Sententiæ Pueriles* and Lily's Grammar ; these offered but a rude introduction to the treasures of ancient literature.

Nor can Shakespeare be said to have been much more familiar with the modern writers of the Continent.

We have remarked already that he was a reader of Montaigne's *Essays* in the version of Florio which was published in the year 1603. Gonzalo's description of his ideal Commonwealth in the *Tempest* is a reminiscence of this translation more literal than we are accustomed to find

¹ *Hamlet*, I, i, 112-115. *Julius Cæsar*, II, ii, 15, sqq. ² *King Lear*, IV, vi, 183.

in Shakespeare,¹ and this instance of his accurate recollection, coupled with his known possession of the book, makes one inclined to think that Montaigne was a favourite.

It would be pleasant to share Mr. Swinburne's opinion² that he loved also that other great Frenchman, whose genius, however it may have been warped by circumstance, was yet intrinsically so Shakesperian, but probability will hardly allow us to suppose that Shakespeare had read the authentic Rabelais. There are two allusions in the plays to Gargantua, and the name of the pedant Holofernes may have been borrowed from Master Tubal Holofernes who taught the giant to say his A B C backwards; but these allusions were in all likelihood picked up from an English adaptation of the *History of Gargantua*, which contained only the popular buffoonery,—the "*gros rire Tourangeau*."³ There is nothing which leads us to think that Shakespeare had acquaintance with the wisdom of Pantagruel, or with the perennial mystery of the Dive Bouteille.

It has been thought, from a consideration of the plots of not less than four plays, that Shakespeare had read Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques, extraites des œuvres du Bandel*, published at Lyons in 1594, either in the original or through some translation, the remembrance of which has perished with it. It was apparently from this source that the poet took the story of Hero's feigned death in *Much Ado about Nothing*. The plots of *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, and the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, are also to be found in Belleforest's adaptation of Bandello's novels: but in these

¹ *Tempest*, II, i, 147, sqq.

² Mr. Swinburne in his *Studies of Shakespeare* (p. 121) speaks of "Shakespeare's admiration and even imitation of Rabelais."

³ A *History of Gargantua* was entered on the books of the Stationers' Company in 1594, but there appear to have been many previous versions. There was one in Captain Cox's library.—*Shakespeare Society Papers* (1849), p. 28.

three cases English versions of the stories are known which were most likely the immediate parents of the Shakesperian dramas. Perhaps there was also an English version of the *Much Ado* story to which Belleforest had no exclusive patent. Indeed, these popular tales of Bandello, which were extant in the year 1554, led a most cosmopolitan existence, and travelled from country to country with marvellous rapidity. The story of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* came to Shakespeare from Italy by way of Spain, through the *Diana* of Montemayor, which is the one solitary example of Spanish literature that can be claimed for his library.

This book belonged also to the library of Don Quixote de la Mancha, and was one of the few volumes that escaped the priest's ordeal of fire.

"'What shall be done,' said the barber, 'with these small books that remain?'"

"'Those,' said the priest, 'are, probably, not books of chivalry, but of poetry.' Then, opening one, he found it was the *Diana* of George de Montemayor, and, concluding that all the others were of the same kind, he said, 'These do not deserve to be burnt like the rest, for they cannot do the mischief that those of chivalry have done; they are works of genius and fancy, and do injury to none. . . . My opinion is that it should not be burnt, but that all that part should be expunged which treats of the sage Felicia, and of the enchanted fountain, and also most of the longer poems; leaving him, in God's name, the prose, and also the honour of being the first in that kind of writing.'"¹

The *Diana* was translated into English by Bartholomew Young, but his work was not published until the year 1598, when the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* was already on the stage. This seems to have been the only printed version; but there were earlier manuscript translations by Thomas Wilson, Edward Paston, and Sir Philip Sydney, which Shakespeare may have seen. Such is the uncertain link

¹ Montemayor was first, not in time, but in merit. His work is an imitation of the *Arcadia* of the Italian Sanazzaro, which was so popular that it passed through sixty editions in the 16th century. The *Diana* was imitated by Cervantes himself in "the first fruits of his poor genius," the prose pastoral of *Galatea*. He had not the heart, even in fiction, to commit his own child to the flames. [*Don Quixote*, Book I, Chapter vi.]

which connects Shakespeare's reading with the literature of Spain.

There is more to be said about his acquaintance with Italian writers. It has been inferred from certain passages in his plays that Shakespeare had visited Italy, so exact is his portrayal of Italian manners and customs.¹ Such a visit is, to say the least, extremely improbable. At the same time it seems that he was more familiar with Italian than with any other foreign language. He was conversant with the Italian Dictionary, and perhaps with the person of John Florio, the translator of Montaigne, who was a *protégé* of Lord Southampton: and there is, at least, a presumption that he had read some Italian works in their native tongue. For example, the *Hecatommithi* of Gio Giraldi Cinthio, published in the year 1565, may have supplied the framework of *Measure for Measure*, and almost certainly furnished the plot of *Othello*; and as no English translation of Cinthio's novels is known to have been extant in Shakespeare's time, one may naturally suppose that he read them in the Italian. But those who are impressed with the knowledge of French shown in *Henry V* may prefer to think that he was indebted to a French version published in Paris by Gabriel Chapuys in 1584.

Again, the bond story in the *Merchant of Venice* bears so close a resemblance to the first tale of the fourth day in the *Pecorone* of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, written in 1378 and first printed at Milan in 1550, that it is supposed to have been immediately borrowed from this source.² It is also thought, with good reason, that an Italian comedy

¹ See especially Mr. Armitage Brown, *Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems*, 1838.

² It has been conjectured, however, from the reference made by Stephen Gosson in the *School of Abuse* (1579) to the lost play of *The Jew*, which set forth, as he says, both "the greediness of worldly choosers and the bloody minds of usurers," that the bond story and the story of the three caskets had been united before the *Merchant of Venice*. And Shakespeare may have found all the details of the Italian novel in the old play.

called *Il Sacrificio* suggested to Shakespeare the serious plot, and even the title, of *Twelfth Night*. The *Pecorone* and *Il Sacrificio* may have been reproduced in English before Shakespeare's plays were written, but no English versions have been discovered. His acquaintance with Bandello's stories has been already mentioned. It is also probable that he had read, in one form or another, some of Boccaccio's novels.

The story of the three caskets in the *Merchant of Venice* might have been taken from the *Decameron*, where it makes the first story of the tenth day; but it is more probable that Shakespeare took the tale from the English *Gesta Romanorum*, for there are no distinctive features that mark the *Decameron* story as Shakespeare's original. But the ninth novel of the second day is the most likely source of the general plan of *Cymbeline*. It has been pointed out by Malone that the incident of the "mole cinque-spotted" upon Imogen's left breast must have been taken directly from Boccaccio's novel, since it does not occur in the imitation printed in *Westward for Smelts*, which was long supposed to be the immediate model.¹ Such a resemblance of detail certainly goes far to show that Shakespeare had read either the original novel, or some lost translation which was more literal than the adaptation in *Westward for Smelts*.²

Of the Italian poets, Ariosto is the only one of whom there is any evidence that he occupied the mind of Shakespeare. It was George Gascoigne's translation of the comedy *I suppositi* which supplied the episode of Lucentio and Bianca's love in the *Taming of the Shrew*.³

¹ *Cymbeline*, II, ii, 37.

² There was an old black-letter tale, called *Frederick of Gene*, which was published in 1518, and which is said to be a version of the *Decameron* story. A copy was in Captain Cox's library.—*Shakespeare Society Papers*, Vol. IV. (1849) p. 22.

³ This episode does not occur in the earlier play, *The Taming of a Shrew*, but was added by Shakespeare.

It is far from certain that he had read the greatest of Ariosto's works, the *Orlando Furioso*. This poem had been translated by Sir John Harington in 1591, and it has been thought to furnish the plot of *Much Ado about Nothing*. But, inasmuch as the central motive of the plot, the feigned death and resuscitation of Hero, does not occur in Ariosto, and as the only incident in the poem used by Shakespeare which is not found in Bandello might have been taken from the *Faerie Queene*, we are led to Bandello's novel, to which we have already alluded, as the more probable source of the Shakesperian comedy. His acquaintance with the *Orlando* must remain "not proven."

Was Shakespeare moved by "the numbers that Petrarch flowed in"? The solitary allusion in *Romeo and Juliet*¹ raises a question which we have no means of answering. There is no trace of Tasso, though the translation of Fairfax, "one of the glories of Elizabethan literature," was published in 1600, and would probably come within the range of Shakespeare's reading.²

And there is no sign of any acquaintance with Dante.

And now we may ask with what English prose literature Shakespeare was familiar.

It is well known that in the construction of his dramas of English history, "he has essentially followed only one single authority, namely, Holinshed's *Chronicle*, which appeared in 1577 in two folio volumes, and in an enlarged edition in 1586-87."³ It was the latter edition which was used by the poet.

Commentators have exemplified the fidelity with which

¹ *Romeo and Juliet*, II, iv, 40.

² A translation of the first five books by Carew appeared in 1594. The verse in *Macbeth*, "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased," etc., bears a close resemblance to a passage in the *Amadigi* of Bernardo Tasso, the father of Torquato:—

"Ma chi puote con erbe od argoment
Guarir l'infermita del intelletto?"—Cant. xxxvi, St. 37.

But afflicted humanity has often expressed this thought.

³ *Gervinus* (Eng. Edn.), p. 252.

Shakespeare copied the narratives of Holinshed, by quoting many instances in which he adopted the blunders and inaccuracies of the chronicler. He was, indeed, more careful to preserve the soul of history than the details of fact, for, in the words of Gervinus, "he respected the law of inward truth, and not that of chronology." The *Chronicles* of Hall, and Stow, and, perhaps, Lord Berners' translation of Froissart, also furnished him with the raw material of history. Perhaps, too, he read Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey*, for manuscript copies of this work were made use of by the chroniclers, and had a private circulation long before it was printed in 1641. A curious parallel has been adduced by a member of the Shakespeare Society between a passage in Cavendish's account of Wolsey's embassy to France and the scene between Henry the Fifth and Katherine.¹ But this is probably a mere coincidence.

There are a few books of travel which we may conjecturally place in Shakespeare's Library.

It is difficult to imagine that any other age than the "spacious times of great Elizabeth" could have produced the *Tempest*, which is the very quintessence of all travellers' tales. Accounts of Sir George Somers' shipwreck on the Bermudas in 1609, such as the pamphlet appearing in the next year with the title, *The Discovery of the Bermudas, or Devil's Islands*, Eden's *Historie of Travayle*, and many another story of adventure may have gone to its making. Perhaps the noises of the enchanted isle were caught from the travels of Marco Polo, who says that in the great desert near the town of Lop "you shall hear in the aire the sound of tabers and other instruments, to put the travellers in fear by evill spirits that make these sounds."²

¹ *Shakespeare Society Papers* (1847), p. 175.

² *Tempest*, III, ii, 144. Cp. "A thousand twangling instruments. . . . I would I could see this *taborer*," etc. Marco Polo's travels were translated by John Frampton and published in 1579. But these unearthly sounds are common in all travellers' tales from Sinbad downwards.

We may assume, too, that Shakespeare had read Hackluyt's *Voyagers' Tales*, and particularly the narrative of Sir Walter Raleigh's sailing to "those golden shores" of Guiana in 1595, wherein are marvellous stories concerning—

"the cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders."

He may also have read Linschoten's *Discours of Voyages*, an English translation of which appeared in the year 1598. Maria's description of Malvolio, who "does smile his face into more lines than are in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies," probably alludes to a map engraved in this work, which is said to be multilinear in the extreme, and to be the first in which the Eastern Islands are included.¹

When we leave these romances of real life, and enter the domain of pure fiction, we find there a number of novels and popular tales which were undoubtedly welcomed by Shakespeare.

The best novel that was ever written was given to the world in Shakespeare's forty-second year, when the first part of *Don Quixote* saw the light. This part was translated into English in the year 1612, but there is no evidence which will allow us to place it in our poet's library.

In the latter half of the sixteenth century the old romances of chivalry, which received in *Don Quixote* so imperishable a monument, appear to have passed their meridian of popularity. Yet they enjoyed a certain vogue in England among the Elizabethan wits. *Palmerin of England* was translated into English in the year 1580, and *Amadis of Gaul* in 1592. It is not very probable that Shakespeare read these romances: but he thought that a

¹ *Twelfth Night*, III, ii, 85. Mr. Dyce, however, thought that some separate map, not belonging to a book, was intended.

man like Don Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost* would have them at his fingers' end :—

“ This child of fancy, that Armado hight,
For interim to our studies, shall relate,
In highborn words, the worth of many a knight,
From tawny Spain, lost in the world's debate.”¹

Shakespeare felt, perhaps, that there was no place for these windy extravagancies in his own earnest and stirring century. The phantom deeds of the knight errant had become “lost in the world's debate,” as the play is forgotten when the theatre is on fire.

There was another kind of romance, however, which had a firmer hold upon the taste of the Elizabethan age.

While we cannot trace any plays of Shakespeare to the romances of chivalry, the mention of the pastoral romance calls to mind at once the stories of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the *Winter's Tale*, and *As You Like It*.

We have seen that Shakespeare was acquainted with the *Diana Inamorada* of Montemayor, which, though not the original source, was still the chief model in this school of writing, and was very popular in England during the latter years of the sixteenth century. The pastoral romance which is best known, and which still retains “a perfume in the mention,” is the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney; and it is pleasant to know that Shakespeare had walked in this old garden of prose and verse. In the second book of the *Arcadia* is a chapter called “The Pitifull State and Storie of the Paplagonian unkinde King and his kinde Sonne,” and there is no doubt that to Shakespeare's recollection of this chapter we owe the episode of Gloucester and his two sons in *King Lear*.

And the scene at the beginning of the fifth Act of

¹ *Love's Labour's Lost*, I, i, 172. Falstaff in *Henry IV*, I, ii, 16, has been suspected of an allusion to the *Voyage of the Wandering Knight*, by Jean de Cathenay, translated into English *circa*. 1600.

Love's Labour's Lost, which won the admiration of Dr. Johnson by its "finished representation of colloquial excellence," is also supposed to be imitated from a passage in Sidney's *Arcadia*.

But the Spanish and Portugese romances had not nearly so strong nor so permanent an influence upon English fiction as the Italian novel of manners, from which, as we have seen, Shakespeare took so many of his plots. And as Sir Philip Sidney gave an added touch of poetry to the pastoral, so Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia*, and Lily in his *Euphues*, ballasted the light vessel of the *novella* with philosophy and religion. There does not appear to be any actual evidence that Shakespeare had read the *Utopia*, but the book was accessible to him in English, and he is not likely to have passed it by. And he must have been acquainted with Lily, though perhaps Professor Gervinus goes too far in his opinion that "from no other of his predecessors had Shakespeare, especially as regards the dexterous play of words in the merry parts of his comedies and dramas, learned and obtained so much as from Lyly."

Tales more or less Euphuistic in style he had certainly read. He knew the *Rosalynde* of Thomas Lodge, which was a professed imitation of Lily;¹ and which now shines with reflected glory as parent to the sweetest of English comedies.² And he borrowed the *Winter's Tale* from a

¹ The second title is "Euphues' Golden Legacy, found after his death in his cell at Silexdra. Bequeathed to Philautus' sonnes nursed up with their Father in England."

² *As You Like It*. A long list of parallel passages might be drawn up. The imitation of the songs is noteworthy. Thus Touchstone's "very false gallop of verses" looks like a burlesque of such lines as,—

"When as I talke of Roselind
The God from coynesse waxeth kind."

The song, "It was a lover and his lass," was probably suggested by Corydon's song,

"A blithe and bonny country lass
Heigh ho, bonny lass,
Sate sighing on the tender grass," etc.

semi-pastoral story of the Euphuist Robert Green, which was published in 1588 under the title of *Pandosto, the Triumph of Time*, altered in the later editions to *The Pleasant History of Dorastus and Faunia*. It is probable, indeed, that he saw most of Greene's tracts, including his last novel, *A Groatworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance*; which contains in an appended address the celebrated reference to the "only Shake-scene in a country."¹

Two other popular English stories known to Shakespeare were Barnaby Riche's *Farewell to the Military Profession* and William Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*. These were both translated or adapted from the Italian novels of Bandello and Boccaccio.

The novel originates in the chap-book; and most of the Italian stories which have exercised so large an influence upon English literature may be found existing in an earlier and less ornate garb. It is very probable that Shakespeare learnt more than is generally suspected from these popular story-books. In the *Gesta Romanorum* he might have found the original hints for the story of *Lear*, and for that of the Three Caskets in the *Merchant of Venice*. The episode of Bottom's "translation" may have been suggested by the history of Dr. Faustus, who, upon Ash Wednesday, "made that everyone had an ass's head on with great long ears." And the black-letter *Hystorie of Hamblet*, an adaptation of Belleforest, is most likely the immediate source of the play.

Other popular story-books to which Shakespeare had

¹ There are passages in Nash's *Pierce Pennilesse* which may have been in Shakespeare's mind when he was writing *As You Like It*. Cf. *As You Like It*, III, ii, 119, and II, v, 15, with the following:—

"I would trot a false gallop through the rest of his ragged verses," etc.

Cf. *As You Like It*, III, iii, 6, and *Pierce Pennilesse*, p. 28,—“Ovid might as well have read his verses to the Getes that understood him not.” Cf. also *Hamlet*, III, i, 67, and *Pierce Pennilesse*, p. 48 (coyle), and *Macbeth*, I, v, 41, sqq., and *Pierce Pennilesse*, p. 78.

resource were *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, translated and printed by Caxton,¹ *Reynard the Fox*,² and *The Nine Worthies*.³ It is possible that he had seen *Westward for Smelts*, which, although it cannot have been the only source of the *Cymbeline* fable, may have helped to suggest it, and which may also have led Shakespeare to place the "local habitation" of his *Merry Wives* at Windsor. It is idle to speculate what "tale of Tereus" was read by Imogen, but if Shakespeare did not refer to Gower or Ovid, he may have been thinking of a book of tales containing the story of Tereus and Progne, barbarously entitled "A Petite Palace of Pettie his pleasure."

Amongst the jest-books of his day Shakespeare refers to *The Hundred Mery Talys*,⁴ *The Humour of Forty Fancies*,⁵ *A Pennyworth of Wit*,⁶ *The Book of Riddles*,⁷ *Wits, Fits, and Fancies*.⁸

One of the most interesting books in Shakespeare's library is a volume published anonymously in the year 1589, and called *The Arte of English Poesie*. It was well known to Shakespeare, who may have used it to some extent as a guide to the *technique* of his art, and who remembered some of its quotations. This treatise, since the year 1605, has been generally ascribed to the pen of George Puttenham, one of Elizabeth's gentlemen pensioners. Its history, which has a certain interest of its own, may be found in Disraeli's *Amenities of Literature*.⁹ Another con-

¹ *Troilus and Cressida*—e.g., V, v. Also *Macbeth*, III, i, 68.

² *Romeo and Juliet*, II, iv, 19. 1 *Henry IV*, III, iii, 60.

³ *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 563 and 580.

⁴ "An old collection of foolish anecdotes taken from *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, printed by Rastell and again by Walley in 1558." It was in the library of Captain Cox.—*Shakespeare Society Papers* (1849), p. 33.

⁵ *Taming of the Shrew*, III, ii, 70.

⁶ *Love's Labour's Lost*, III, i, 28. A book entitled *A Pennyworth of Wytt* was licensed to John Sampson in 1561.

⁷ *Merry Wives of Windsor*, I, i, 209.

⁸ *Henry V*, II, iii, 20.

⁹ Vol. ii, p. 278 (Edn. 1861). See also the Introduction to Arber's reprint.

temporary book which Shakespeare had read is the *Treatise of Honour and Honourable Quarrels*, by Vincentio Saviola. It is burlesqued by Touchstone in a well-known passage in *As You Like It*.¹

The *Arte of Rhetorique*, by Thomas Wilson, first printed in 1553 may have been one of Shakespeare's books; for the well-known passage in *Othello* beginning "Who steals my purse steals trash," resembles a passage in Wilson almost too closely to admit the supposition of coincidence. Perhaps, too, some of the "dark words and inkhorn terms" of *Love's Labour's Lost* were picked up from this source. It is thought that Shakespeare was also acquainted with *The Orator* of Alexander Silvayn, translated by Munday, and published in 1596, as the Ninety-fifth Declamation in this work, "of a Jew who would for his debt have a pound of flesh of a Christian," contains what might well be the germs of Shylock's arguments before the Senate in the *Merchant of Venice*.

The theological reading of Shakespeare does not appear to have been extensive. Some lines in *Troilus and Cressida* are said by the commentators to be derived from a passage in the judicious Hooker, whose *Ecclesiastical Polity* was published in the last decade of the sixteenth century; but the resemblance is not a sufficient proof that he had studied the greatest product of the English Church.

Indeed, the only theological book which he can be said with any certainty to have known is Harsnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*; though we might, perhaps, add Bayle's *Actes of English Votaries* and Reynolds' *God's Revenge against Adultery*.² It is evident, from the use to

¹ *As You Like It*, V, iv, 83, *sqq.*

² In looking over the proof sheets of this Essay, away from books, it occurs to me that it is a mistake to describe Reynolds' book as theological. It is, so far as I recollect, a mere collection of stories.

which it is put in *King Lear*, that the poet had made a study of Harsnet's work, not, perhaps, from any anxiety to find weak points in the armour of Rome, but in order to obtain the names of devils, and information about the habits of imps and witches. Reynolds' book may have been taken up in the same way with an eye to dramatic business ; for the only fact which connects it with Shakespeare is the disjointed occurrence of two names, which the poet has indissolubly united—Othello and Iago.

Shakespeare, indeed, was no theologian, and we cannot imagine that he took more than a passing interest in the various temporary forms which were assumed during his lifetime by religious doctrine. "Grace is Grace," he said, despite of all controversy."¹ It would be impertinent to add that this indifference to form did not extend to the spirit. Shakespeare's appreciation of the vital truths of religion is shown, not, as is often said, by the very large number of scriptural allusions and quotations contained in the plays²—the devil can quote scripture—but by the still greater number of passages which reflect the tone and spirit of the New Testament. It may be remarked before leaving this part of our subject, which has been so exhaustively treated by Bishop Wordsworth,³ that the Biblical quotations show an acquaintance with the great books of the Apocrypha which are now so strangely unfamiliar to many readers of the Bible.

It would almost be an anachronism to look for any scientific books upon Shakespeare's shelves. But he was a

¹ *Measure for Measure*, I, ii, 25.

² Speaking of the *Mysteries*, which had not yet lost their popularity during Shakespeare's boyhood, Mr. J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps writes :—"It is impossible to say to what extent even the scriptural allusions in the works of Shakespeare himself may not be attributed to recollections of such performances ; for, in one instance at least, the reference by the great dramatist is to the history as represented in those plays, not to that recorded in the New Testament."

³ Charles Wordsworth on *Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible*, 1864.

contemporary of Francis Bacon, and may have noted the first streaks that heralded the dawn of modern research. Indeed, the parallel passages which have been so laboriously compiled by the Society for maintaining the identity of Shakespeare the poet and Bacon the philosopher, prove at least this much—that Shakespeare was acquainted with some of Bacon's works.¹

Attempts have indeed been made to prove that Shakespeare was in some points in advance of the scientific knowledge of his day. For instance there is a manifest allusion to the circulation of the blood (which was first publicly enunciated by Harvey in the year 1616) in the beautiful lines of *Julius Cæsar* (II, i)—

"Thou art my own true wife,
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
That visit my sad heart."²

Harvey returned from Italy in 1603, and so the idea might have got abroad before it was announced in his lectures as Professor of Anatomy to the London College of Physicians.

But, in any case, Shakespeare might have obtained his knowledge from the *Christianismi Restitutio* of Servetus, who at least knew how the blood passes from one ventricle of the heart to another. In this, as in other points, Shakespeare shows that he was fully abreast with the tide of intellectual progress.

It may be remarked that a few facts and expressions in Shakespeare have been traced to Batman's *Commentary on Bartholome de Proprietatibus Rerum*. From this source he is said to have taken "the insane root that takes the reason prisoner"; but it is more probable that this was picked up from Plutarch's *Life of Antony*.

¹ See *Did Francis Bacon write "Shakespeare" ? Thirty-two Reasons for Believing that he did.* W. H. Guest and Co., 1884. e.g. pp. 13—16, p. 20.

² Compare *Coriolanus*, I, i, 139:—

"I send it through the rivers of the blood,
Even to the court, the heart."

When we turn to the poetical shelves of our imaginary bookcase we naturally find a long row of dramatic works. Some of these are the dramatist's professional stock-in-trade, and were used in the composition of his plays : others are quoted only in the unflattering shape of burlesque and parody : many contemporary playwrights, whose works Shakespeare must have known, are never alluded to ; one only is familiarly and even lovingly quoted.

The dramas of which it is certain that Shakespeare made professional use are all of unknown authorship. They are *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, *The True Chronicle of King Leir and his Three Daughters*, *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, and *The Taming of a Shrew*.

The old play of *Henry the Fifth* seems to have been written originally in prose, although some parts have been chopped, apparently through the mistaken kindness of the publisher, into a very blank species of verse. It furnished Shakespeare with little more than a few hints for the two parts of *Henry IV* and his own *Henry V* ; and the most interesting point connected with it is the appearance among the companions of Prince Hal of a certain fat knight named Sir John Oldcastle, who afterwards became known to literature as Sir John Falstaff. There is no doubt, however, that Shakespeare retained in the first instance the name of Oldcastle, and altered it only, as it is reasonably conjectured, in deference to the memory of Sir John Oldcastle, the Protestant martyr. Hence the apology contained in the epilogue to *Henry IV*, Part II : "Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man."

Shakespeare was somewhat more indebted for his *King Lear* to the old play on the same subject, but in this case he adopted only the barest outlines and made considerable changes in the development of the plot. The most vital

alteration lies in the conclusion. The old play actually has that commonplace "happy ending" of Lear's restitution and Cordelia's settlement in life, to which Shakespeare's tragedy was condemned when "Tate put his hook into the nostrils of this leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw it about more easily," and which aroused the critical indignation of Charles Lamb. Scarcely less noticeable among the improvements of the master hand are the introduction of the Fool, the episode of Gloucester and his two sons, and the madness of Lear. Between the spirit and diction of the two Lears there is a great gulf fixed.

It is evident that Shakespeare, when he wrote his *King John*, was acquainted with *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*, which was printed in 1591, but as the earlier playwright followed the same Chronicles as Shakespeare, the extent of the latter's indebtedness to the old play cannot fully be ascertained. The manner of Arthur's death is one of the incidents taken directly from *The Troublesome Reign*, in which play the dead body is compared to a—

"withered flower,
Who in his life shined like the morning's blush,
Cast out of door."

Mr. Collier has remarked that if Shakespeare had been a common plagiarist he might have borrowed these beautiful lines in preference to the use of his own metaphor,—

"An empty casket, where the jewel of life
By some damned hand was robbed and ta'en away."

But Shakespeare had that vein of literary honour which borrows only to improve.

The *Pleasant conceited Historie called The Taming of a Shrew* was published in the year 1594. "It hath made a number of us so perfect," wrote Harington in 1596, "that now everyone can rule a shrew in our country—save he

that hath her." The piece was acted by the Earl of Pembroke's servants, and was thus familiar to Shakespeare, who rewrote it, after the fashion of his day, with somewhat less than his usual alteration of persons and dialogue. The vast superiority of the Shakesperian drama may be gathered from a comparison of the two Inductions.¹ It is a very singular fact that a Christopher Sly was living at Stratford-upon-Avon in Shakespeare's lifetime, and that the name occurs in the old play as well as in Shakespeare's drama, where the Warwickshire villages of Wilnecotte and Burton-on-the-Heath are alluded to. Perhaps the name was suggested by Shakespeare, if indeed his own 'prentice hand had not actually helped to construct the bald original of his mature comedy.²

The plot of *Measure for Measure* was probably to some extent suggested by the *Promos and Cassandra* of George

¹ For instance, Shakespeare has cut out altogether the stilted passage beginning "Now that the gloomie shadow," etc. The three lines, "Cupple up the hounds," etc., are expanded into the delightfully natural conversation between the Lord and the Huntsman about the merits of the dogs, each praising his favourite hounds. In the old Induction the Lord's plan is introduced "at its meridian": Shakespeare allows us to see the "first dawn, the early streak" of the idea, as it forms in his mind:—

"O monstrous beast! How like a swine he lies!
Grim death, how foul and loathsome is thine image!
Sirs, I will practise on this drunken man.
What think you, if he were conveyed to bed," etc.

From this point the details of the plot grow and multiply as it takes a gradually stronger hold upon the Lord's imagination. The second scene was wholly added by Shakespeare. In the original Induction the play is chosen by the Lord, but in Shakespeare's, with more humour, by Sly.

² The history of the Induction may be noted as furnishing a good instance of a Shakesperian story hunt. It was founded upon a story told of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, which is to be found in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, where it is professedly taken from Marco Polo: Percy also has a ballad on the subject, which is apparently of later date than the play. In the Shakespeare Society papers the story is given as a fragmentary tale, *The Waking Man's Dream* (c. 1620), which is conjectured to be from a reprint of Richard Edward's story-book of 1570. The story is told by Goulart, the first English translation of whom appeared in 1607. He probably followed Heuterus (de Rebus Burgundiis), who had it from a letter of Ludovicus Vives, who in turn states that he heard it from an old officer at the Duke's court. Just at this point, when we really seem to have run the story to earth, we are carried away into remote fields of literature, where the story of Christopher Sly still flourishes—to the Thousand and One Nights, the story of the Sleeper Awakened, the story of Xalfun the Bashful in the Thousand and One Days, to the History of the Kingdom of the Assassins, and the story of Dionysus and Danocles, whence Steevens imagined that Shakespeare took his Induction from Cicero (*Tusculan Disputations* V, ii, 1).

Whetstone, a play which was never performed, but which had been printed as early as 1578.¹

It is probable that the *Comedy of Errors* and *Troilus and Cressida* were also partly suggested by older plays, and the lost play of *The Jew*, to which Gosson alludes, may have been the chief source of the *Merchant of Venice*. There was also a drama on the subject of Richard III which preceded that of Shakespeare and kept the stage until the reign of Charles the First. "No copy of this older play is known to exist," says Halliwell-Phillipps, "but one brief speech, and the two following lines have been accidentally preserved :—

‘ My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is ta’en,
And Banister is come for his reward,’—

from which it is clear that the new dramatist did not hesitate to adopt an occasional line from his predecessor, although he entirely omitted the character of Banister."

It is also suspected that dramas on the subject of Hamlet, Richard II, and Anthony and Cleopatra had appeared before those of Shakespeare.

An interesting point is raised by the obvious similarities between the supernatural scenes in *Macbeth* and Middleton's play, *The Witch*. Upon the whole it appears most likely that Middleton copied Shakespeare, but there is good evidence to support the contrary view.²

¹ Whetstone says that it was "never presented upon stage," in the *Heptameron*, published in 1582, which contains a prose rendering of Cinthio's novel.

² The evidence to show that Shakespeare imitated Middleton has been collected by Malone and Steevens, and may be summarised thus :—

1. Middleton probably died soon after the year 1626, and the pieces published during his lifetime range in date from 1602 to 1626: the first dramatic piece in which he had a hand (*The Old Law*) was acted in 1599. *The Witch* was not published till many years after his death; *Macbeth* was not printed till 1623; and, as there is no decisive evidence to fix the date of their composition, it is quite an open question which play was written first.

2. The songs beginning "Come away," etc., and "Black spirits," etc., are to be found in *The Witch*, while the two first words only in each case are printed in *Macbeth*, like familiar references.

3. It is more likely that Shakespeare should have taken hints from Middleton

A question of the same kind is raised by the resemblances between our poet's *Julius Cæsar* and the drama of the same name published by William Alexander, afterwards Earl of Sterline, in 1607. The date of Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* is uncertain; but there is some reason to suppose that he had read Sterline's tragedy before writing his own. And he had, probably, before writing the *Tempest*, read the same writer's *Darius*, which was printed in 1603; unless we attribute to coincidence the striking likeness between a passage in *Darius* and the lines beginning—

“The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces.”¹

In the comedy called *Wily Beguiled* there are some unmistakeably Shakesperian touches. The nurse seems to have stepped out of *Romeo and Juliet*; Will Cricket's wooing of Peg is a second edition of Touchstone's courtship; and there are also verbal similarities, verging in one instance on plagiarism. But in this case it is all but certain that the more obscure writer was the imitator.

Amongst the plays which are burlesqued by Shakespeare are the *Jeronino* and *Spanish Tragedy* of the “sporting Kyd,” who seems to have been considered fair game by all his contemporaries. Peele's *Battle of Alcazar* is also parodied, with other less known productions. The raving of Zabina in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* is in one place echoed by Ophelia, and passages in the same play are twice adapted to the braggart vein of Pistol.

than that Middleton should have ventured into a region already occupied by the very popular play of *Macbeth*.

4. Middleton in his other dramas borrowed little, and appears to have been unacquainted, or, at least, unconnected, with Shakespeare.

5. In the dedication, the author of *The Witch* remarks that he “recovered this ignorant ill-fated labour of his” (from the playhouse, presumably) “not without much difficulty. Witches are *ipso facto* by law condemned, and that only, I think, hath made her *lie so long* in an imprisoned obscurity.” This dedication was probably added soon after 1603, when the Act of King James against witches was passed; and *The Witch* was thus, in all probability, one of Middleton's earliest pieces.

¹*Tempest*, IV, i, 150, sqq.

Other plays quoted or referred to by Shakespeare must be mentioned in a foot-note.¹

Marlowe is the only one of Shakespeare's contemporaries whom he quotes, as on equal terms, with any frequency.²

- ¹ "King Edward III" (?) ... *Romeo and Juliet*, II, ii, 58.
 "The Longer thou Livest the more Fool thou art" ... *King Lear*, III, vi, 26.
 "Comical History of Alphonsus" ... *Hamlet*, III, ii, 165 (burlesque).
 "The Turkish Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek" (Peele) ... *2 Henry IV*, II, iv, 193 (burlesque).
 "Damon and Pythias" (R. Edwardes) ... *Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, i, 290 (burlesque).
 "Soliman and Perseda" ... *King John*, I, i, 244 (burlesque).
 "King Cambyzes" (Preston) ... *1 Henry IV*, II, iv, 427.
 "Albumazar" (?) ... *Tempest*, III, ii, 15.
 "A Christian turned Turk" (?) ... *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II, iii, 24.
 "Sir Giles Goosecap" ... *Merry Wives*, I, ii, 307.
 "Jack Drum's Entertainment" (interlude) ... *All's Well that Ends Well*, III, vi, 41.

References to the *Moralities* are frequent, e.g.,—*Twelfth Night*, IV, ii, 134; *Measure for Measure*, II, i, 181, and III, i, 11, sqq.; *1 Henry IV*, II, iv, 499; *2 Henry IV*, III, ii, 343; *Richard III*, III, i, 82; *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, iii, 22; *Hamlet*, III, iv, 98, and III, ii, 16.

² Marlowe is the only contemporary whom he quotes with a direct allusion to his authority, and that not until after his death:—

"Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,—

He never loved that loved not at first sight."—*As You Like It*, III, v, 82.

Such a vague conjecture as the reference of the line, "When rank Thersites opens his mastick jaw," to Dekker's *Satiromastix* need only be mentioned. Steevens thought that Preston, the author of *Cambyzes*, a play ridiculed by Shakespeare in *Henry IV*, was intended to be satirized in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV, 2: "O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life!" Elizabeth gave Preston a pension of £20 a year on account of his "genteel and graceful disputing" before her, and of his excellent acting in the tragedy of *Dido* at Cambridge in 1564. The allusion to this is most doubtful. For one thing, sixpence a day is not £20 a year. In the *Taming of the Shrew*, Induction i, 88, there is an allusion to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Women Pleased*, and the song in *Measure for Measure*, IV, i, 1, "Take, O take those lips away," occurs in the *Bloody Brother* of Fletcher, and may have been written by him. Chapman's *Revenge for Honour* seems to have suggested some lines in *Measure for Measure*, I, ii, 134. There are also references to Sir John Harington's *Metamorphoses of Ajax* (e.g., *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii). An account of this curious production, with extracts, may be found in Beloe's *Anecdotes* (1807), vol. ii, p. 372.

Allusions to Marlowe are:—

- "Faustus" ... *Troilus and Cressida*, II, ii, 82.
 " " " " ... *Merry Wives*, IV, v, 71.
 " " " " ... *Othello*, IV, xv, 64.
 "Tamburlaine" ... *Hamlet*, IV, v, 68.
 " " " " ... *Merry Wives*, I, iii, 93 (burlesque).
 " " " " ... *2 Henry IV*, II, iv, 178 (parody).
 "Edward II" ... *Hamlet*, III, i, 79.
 "Dido" ... *Macbeth*, I, i, 3.
 "Lust's Dominion" ... *Othello*, II, i, 200.
 " " " " ... III, iii, 387.
 " " " " ... III, iii, 445.
 "Hero and Leander" ... *As You Like It*, III, v, 80.
 " " " " ... *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I, i, 20, sqq.
 " " " " ... III, 120.
 " " " " ... *Hamlet*, I, i, 118.
 " " " " ... *Romeo and Juliet*, V, i, 8.
 " " " " ... III, ii, 1.

And it was no perishable leaf which Shakespeare wove into that poet's crown, when he echoed a dying fall from his beautiful song—

“Come live with me, and be my love.”¹

No such haunting refrain from any lyrics of Ben Jonson escaped the pen of Shakespeare. It has been remarked, sufficiently often, that he makes not a single reference to that great personality, notwithstanding the facts that Jonson was once his intimate, though candid, friend, and that Shakespeare had himself acted in his plays.

It is perhaps enough to remember that the dramatic form of poetry does not readily lend itself to personal nor even to literary allusions, and that the greater a dramatist is, the more rare and accidental is their occurrence.

At any rate, it is surely absurd to consider Shakespeare's silence intentional, like the absence of any reference to Ben Jonson in the Will. Whatever their quarrel may have been about, and whatever the “purge” may have been that was administered by Shakespeare, it is not to be supposed that his literary judgment of Jonson's work was at all affected by any outward details. Certainly the absence of all allusion to Jonson proves nothing of the kind.

We may close this brief account of Shakespeare's dramatic reading by remarking that the acquaintance with the contemporary drama which he acquired in his double capacity of playwright and actor must naturally have been very much more extensive than the plays show. Here, as elsewhere throughout this essay, we can but collect scraps and fragments,—“*τεμάχη τῶν μεγάλων δειπνῶν*.”

It may be inferred from *a priori* considerations rather than from the scanty references which are to be found in

¹ *Merry Wives*, III, i, 17, *sqq.*

his plays, that Shakespeare was familiar with a great deal of the English poetry existing in his day.

It can hardly be doubted that he had drunk deep at Chaucer's well, and was beholden to the father of English song for much poetic lore. The Theseus and Hippolyta of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* recall the *Knight's Tale*, as the loves of Troilus and Cressida are a reminiscence of Chaucer's poem. In the beginning of the fifth Act of the *Merchant of Venice* various stories in the *Legend of Good Women* are alluded to. "It is pleasant," said Hazlitt, "to see our great poet so full of his predecessor."

Shakespeare makes some distinct references, too, to the *Confessio Amantis* of Chaucer's contemporary poet, John Gower. When the dramatist wrote the lines—

"In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson,"

he was thinking most probably of Gower's lovely description :

"The world was still on every side.
With open head and foot all bare ;
Her hair, too, spread, she 'gan to fare ;
Upon her clothes girt she was,
And specheless, upon the grass
She glode forth, as an adder doth."

And it may have been Gower's *Tale of Tereus* which Imogen read before her sleep. A more definite allusion is in the *Taming of the Shrew* (I, ii, 69) :—

"Be she as foul as was Florentius' love."

The story of Florentius, or Florent, is in the first book of the *Confessio Amantis*, the knight being therein compelled, in order to obtain the answer to a riddle where his life is the forfeit, to marry a deformed hag—

"As old as Sibyl, and as curst and shrewd
As Socrates' Xantippe, or a worse."

There is little doubt that the author of *Troilus and*

Cressida was acquainted with Lydgate's *Historye, Sege, and Dystruccyon of Troye*. And Malone has shown that Arthur Brooke's poem on *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* contributed to the Shakesperian drama.

Shakespeare was of course familiar with the poems of Spenser. The fairy song in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* (II, i, 2) may have been a reminiscence of the sixth book of the *Faerie Queene* (canto 8), where the line occurs,—

“Through hills and dales, through bushes and thro' breres.”

And the “leaden mace” of Slumber in the soliloquy of Brutus (*Julius Cæsar*, IV, iii, 267) is another Spenserian phrase borrowed from the *Faerie Queene*. There is also thought to be an allusion to Spenser's *Tears of the Muses* in the lines—

“The Thrice Three Muses, mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.”¹

These verses have even been suspected of a reference to Spenser's death, the date of which is not known ; but as it certainly occurred after the year 1598, and therefore almost certainly after the date of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the suspicion need not be entertained.

We may confidently assign a place in Shakespeare's library to much of the poetry of his contemporaries, although we should not expect to find it quoted often in his dramas. There are a few allusions, however, which suggest his knowledge of contemporary verse. Thus Falstaff quotes the first line of the second song in Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* :—

“Have I caught my heavenly jewel?”

It has been thought that Shakespeare made the acquaintance of Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamund* immediately upon the appearance of that poem in 1592, and had some of its

¹ *Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, i, 52.

thoughts and expressions in his mind when writing the soliloquy of Romeo over Juliet's body.¹ Mr. Macrae's recent discovery of the lost play, *The Return from Parnassus*, does not throw much light upon this point, although that play contains a distinct reference to this plagiarism. After Gullio has been quoting *Romeo and Juliet*, Ingenioso remarks:—"Mark! *Romeo and Juliet*! O monstrous theft! I think he will run through a whole book of Samuel Daniel's." "This seems to mean," says Professor Hales,² "that Daniel had helped himself so liberally from the stores of Shakespeare, that to run through one of his books was as good as going to Shakespeare's own pages. Or what does it mean?" Unfortunately it may have just the opposite meaning—that to quote *Romeo and Juliet* was as good as quoting *The Complaint of Rosamund*, because Shakespeare had helped himself so liberally from the stores of Daniel. The latter interpretation is perhaps the most obvious one, though that of Professor Hales is supported by another passage in the play where Daniel is directly accused of plagiaristic habits,—

"Only let him more sparingly make use
Of others' wit, and use his own the more,
That well may scorn base imitation."

It is probable that when Shakespeare wrote the speech of Antony, at the close of *Julius Cæsar*, ending,—

"the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"

he had in mind a passage in Drayton's *Barons' Wars* (published in 1603),—

"In whom in peace the elements all lay
So mixed
That 't seemed, when heaven his modell first began,
In him it showed perfection in a man!"

¹ Nash, in his *Pierce Pennilesse*, published in the same year (1592), says:—"There goes more exquisite paynes and purity of wit to the writing of one such rare poem as *Rosamund* than to a hundred of your dunsticall sermons." "Dunsticall sermons" is good.

² *Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1887, p. 62.

Of course, however, if *Julius Cæsar* was acted before the year 1603, which is quite possible and even probable, Drayton was the imitator.

In considering the relations of Shakespeare to the literature of the Greeks, we intentionally omitted to enquire into his knowledge of Homer, although it is all but certain that he had read Chapman's *Iliad*; and we did so because in this instance his debt to the original is less remarkable than his debt to the translation. How can we explain the Homeric parody in *Troilus and Cressida*, except upon the hypothesis that it is not really Homer, but Chapman, whom Shakespeare knew and parodied? In the same way many a lesser man burlesqued the *Iliad* of Pope, when it was Pope's turn to become an artificial Homer.

A good-sized volume has been written to show the extent of Shakespeare's acquaintance with the Emblem Literature of his day.¹ It will, perhaps, be enough for us to say that he shows most familiarity with Whitney's *Emblems*, a book which was published in the year 1586. And he was evidently at home with Heywood's *Epigrams on Three Hundred Proverbs*, and with Ray's collection.²

Probably the book of "songs and sonnetts" for which Master Slender sighed was Tottel's *Miscellany*, containing poems written by the Earl of Surrey, and others, which was first printed in 1557, and is the earliest Golden Treasury of English verse. The gravedigger in *Hamlet* sings, with imperfect memory, two stanzas from a ballad contained in the same collection. The popularity of Tottel's *Miscellany*, which ran through eight editions in thirty years, prompted the publication of other *florilegia*, of which the *Paradise of*

¹ "Shakespeare and the Emblem Writers: an Exposition of their Similarities of Thought and Expression; preceded by a View of Emblem Literature, down to A.D. 1616," by Henry Green, M.A. Trübner and Co. 1870.

² e.g., *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, III, i, 361; IV, iv, 21; V, i, 12. *Merry Wives*, I, iii, 38; III, iv, 91. *Measure for Measure*, V, i, 178. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 315. *All's Well that Ends Well*, II, ii, 17. *Learn*, III, vi, 20.

Dainty Devices, edited by Richard Edwardes in 1576, proved the most successful. One of Edwardes' own songs there printed is mentioned by Peter in *Romeo and Juliet* :—

“When griping grief the heart doth wound,
And doleful dumps the mind oppress,
Then Musick with her silver sound—

Why ‘silver sound’? why ‘musick with her silver sound’? What say you, Simon Catling?

1 *Mus.*—Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

Peter.—Pretty! What say you, Hugh Rebeck?

2 *Mus.*—I say—‘silver sound,’ because musicians sound for silver.

Peter.—Pretty, too! What say you, James Soundpost?

3 *Mus.*—Faith, I know not what to say.

Peter.—O, I cry you mercy! you are the singer. I will say for you. It is—‘musick with her silver sound,’ because such fellows as you have seldom gold for sounding.

Then Musick with her silver sound,
With speedy help doth lend redress.”

Another of these anthologies,¹ edited by Thomas Proctor and published in 1578, furnishes Pistol with some terrific diction :—

“I hate this loathsome life;
O, Atropos, draw nie,
Untwist the thred of mortall strife,
Send death, and let me die.”

We should carry away a very imperfect notion of the ideal “Library” of Shakespeare if we confined our view to the literary works which he may be supposed to have read. The secret of his culture escapes our meagre analysis of his reading. Books were not the only factors in his literary experience. It might be maintained that they were among the least powerful influences of his intellectual life. In the conversation of the outer world, in theatre and tavern, amid the multitudinous rumour of the great city, Shakespeare's ear would detect many a murmur from the great tides of thought. And he had a warm heart, we may be sure, for

¹ “A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions.”

the folk songs and floating ballads of the country side. We need scarcely seek higher authority for his fund of legend and fairy lore than the oracular crones of Stratford. If he shows some acquaintance with the Arthurian cycle, it is not necessary to assume that he had read *La Mort d'Arthur*. And when he quotes two lines from the old metrical romance of *Sir Beuys*—

"Rats and mice and such small dear
Had been his food this seven long year,"

we may be content to think that he was probably repeating a wandering quotation which had lodged in his memory.

And the same remark may be applied to most of his quotations from popular songs and catches. Scattered throughout the plays are allusions to, and scraps and fragments of a goodly number of old songs and ballads. Of these only one of two are quoted more than once. The burden, "For oh! For oh! the hobby-horse is forgot," occurs twice, and there are two allusions to the ballad of King Stephen. The ballad of King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid is, however, referred to on five occasions, and the manner, still more than the comparative frequency of these references, seems to show that it was a favourite story with Shakespeare. There are also at least four allusions to the old ballads of Robin Hood.¹

¹ (a) Ballads and songs quoted :—

1 Cophetua	... <i>Love's Labour's Lost</i> , I, ii, 114. IV, i, 65, <i>sqq.</i> <i>King Richard II</i> , V, iii, 80. <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , II, i, 14. <i>2 Henry IV</i> , V, iii, 106.
2 The Hobby-horse	... <i>Hamlet</i> , III, ii, 147. <i>Love's Labour's Lost</i> , III, i, 30.
3 King Stephen	... <i>Tempest</i> , IV, i, 221. <i>Othello</i> , II, iii, 92.
4 Jephtha	... <i>Hamlet</i> , II, ii, 422 <i>sqq.</i>
5 Oliver	... <i>As You Like It</i> , III, iii, 80.
6 Friar of Orders Grey	... <i>Taming of the Shrew</i> , IV, i, 104.
7 'Tis Merry in Hall	... <i>2 Henry IV</i> , V, iii, 37.
8 Green Sleeves	... <i>Merry Wives</i> , II, i, 64.
9 The Hunt's up	... <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , III, v, 34.
10 Childe Rowland	... <i>King Lear</i> , III, iv, 187.
11 Chevy Chase	... " " IV, vi, 88.

Such is our imperfect attempt to build up some shadowy semblance of Shakespeare's library. The evidence which we have collected tends to show that Shakespeare, in literature as in other matters, was of the true catholic order. All literature that came fresh from the heart was welcome to him. He loved the genial page. He took delight in the personal *ana* of Plutarch, the garrulity of Pliny, the polished conversation of Montaigne. What he seems to have enjoyed most of all, either in prose or verse, was a good story, a type or transcript of human life. He liked the *Gesta Romanorum* with its store of quaint tales, the fairy stories of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the shadowy records of Holinshed, the old novels and romances which had travelled into our literature

12	Two Lovers	...	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , IV, v, 105.
13	The Dauphin	...	<i>King Lear</i> , III, iv, 103.
14	The Whale, etc.	...	<i>Winter's Tale</i> , IV, iv, 262 (burlesque).
15	Hie dildio dill	...	IV, iv, 181 <i>sqq.</i>
16	Sir Lancelot	...	<i>2 Henry IV</i> , II, iv, 38.
17	The Boy and the Mantle	...	II, iv, 52.
18	Song attributed to Anne Boleyn	...	II, iv, 211.
19	Samingo	...	V, iii.
20	Hey, Robin	...	<i>Twelfth Night</i> , IV, ii, 78.
21	Peg a Ramsey	...	II, iii.
22	Three Merry Men	...	" " "
23	Man in Babylon	...	" " "
24	Twelfth Day of December	...	" " "
25	Elderton, song by	...	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> , V, ii, 26.
26	The life that late I led	...	<i>Taming of the Shrew</i> , IV, i, 143.
27	Barbara's Song	...	<i>Othello</i> , IV, iii, 41.
28	Robin Hood	...	<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> , IV, i, 36.
		...	<i>As You Like It</i> , I, i, 122.
		...	<i>2 Henry IV</i> , V, iii, 107.
		...	<i>Merry Wives</i> , I, i, 178.
29	We will be married o' Sunday	...	<i>Taming of the Shrew</i> , II, i, 326.
30	Fortune thy Foe	...	<i>Merry Wives</i> , III, iii, 69.
31	Was this fair face the cause?	...	<i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> , I, iii, 74.
32	Come o'er the bourn, Bessy	...	<i>Lear</i> , III, vi, 27.
33	Sleep'st or wak'st thou, jolly Shep- herd?	...	III, vi, 43.
34	Farewell, dear Heart—from "The Gol- den Garland of Princely Delights"	...	<i>Twelfth Night</i> , II, iii, 110.
35	Holy thy peace (catch)	...	II, iii, 68.
36	Fire! Fire! (catch)	...	<i>Taming of the Shrew</i> , IV, i, 40 <i>sqq.</i>
37	Jack, boy! Ho, boy! (round)	...	IV, i, 42.
38	Light of Love (dance)	...	<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> , I, ii.
		...	<i>Much Ado</i> , III, iv, 43.

(δ) Ballads used in the composition of plays :—

Robin Goodfellow	...	<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> .
Gernutus	...	<i>Merchant of Venice</i> .

from Spain and Italy. Above all, perhaps, he loved the tales and ballads that grow up, like wild flowers springing from unknown seeds, out of the general heart of man. It seems as if he loved the "mighty line" of Marlowe better than the learned but more artificial productions of Jonson. In brief, what gave a book a claim on Shakespeare's heart was its natural humanity. We can find in him no literary affectations, nor perversities of taste. His favourite books were, simply, the most interesting, the most human, to which he had access.

CHARLES J. BILLSON.

THE CLASSICAL ATTAINMENTS
OF SHAKSPERE.

THE CLASSICAL ATTAINMENTS OF SHAKSPERE.

THE extent of Shakspeare's classical attainments has been, like all other subjects which bear on our great dramatist, worked out at much length. In the eighteenth century, in spite of the efforts of a few critics like Colman and Upton, the current of opinion ran strongly against supposing Shakspeare to have had much learning, and this view was embodied in Dr. Farmer's well-known essay with much humour and force. In the nineteenth century there has been, perhaps, in some quarters, a slight reaction. Let us always be on our guard against over-strained and false interpretation. Malone and Steevens, more particularly the former, give us from time to time, in their notes, examples of subtlety which are worthy of our warmest recognition and praise. Still it is a bold thing to come forward and undertake to fathom the mind of Shakspeare. How diverse must have been the sources whence he drew his inspiration! how permuted must the results have been by his rich and imperial imagination! We may fasten on some piece of mythology which is recondite and assume that Shakspeare got his knowledge of it first-hand. But if we pause a moment for reflection we cannot fail to see that Shakspeare could have got that piece of knowledge in countless ways: to set all books, English or foreign, on

one side, he may have got it from some chance conversation with Ben Jonson at the "Mermaid"; from some sermon of that profuse learning then in fashion; or some young scholar fresh from the University, sent down it may be without taking his degree, eager to join the Bohemian wits and expend his College learning in the service of the Muses: or again, Shakspeare may have met many a "grave and reverend signior" at the Davenants', when he stayed in Oxford on his way to and from Stratford. Because there are things in Shakspeare which we cannot trace at the present day, we must not at once fly to the hypothesis that he possessed a good working knowledge of Latin or Greek originals. There are things we shall never be able to settle; things that only could have been told us by some magic phonograph preserving the very conversations of that merry and stirring age, or by some of those rare little books recovered from the musty cases and decaying lumber-rooms of antiquity, which flutter the breast of our Dibdins.

Let us sift what evidence of Shakspeare's classical attainments we have and see if we can arrive at any conclusions. The subject can be divided into three heads: the use of Latin and Greek words; the use of mythology; and the actual diction of the poet.

With regard to the use of Latin and Greek words, Shakspeare may have picked them up in boyhood at school or from the reading of mature life. What is the testimony of his contemporaries or successors to his classical knowledge? This we can get, most of it, from that admirable book of Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines of the Life of Shakspeare*, and also from Malone's elaborate life of the poet. It would be out of place to quote the various passages here: it is plain from them that Shakspeare's own generation and the immediately suc-

ceeding one had not much belief in his classical attainments. It is, however, worth notice that the well-known quotation from Ben Jonson occurs in a poem expressive of warm affection. The two lines in question are the only ones which have any blame in them, and from such a great scholar as Ben Jonson they mean something different to what they would mean in an ordinary person's mouth.

The following are probably the books Shakspeare read at School :—Lily's Grammar, Pueriles, the Moral Distichs of Cato, the Eclogues of Baptista Mantuanus, portions of Ovid, Nicholas Udall's "Floures for Latin speaking."

The only thing in the plays like the *Moralia* of Cato is *All's Well*, V, iii, 39 :—

"Let's take the instant by the forward top,"

with which compare *Moralia*, Book II :—

"rem tibi quam nosis aptam dimittere noli :
fronte capillata est, posthaec occasio calva."

William Lily's Grammar appears to have been the standard one in England till long into the eighteenth century. I have consulted two copies, either of which Shakespeare might have used : the editions of 1549 and 1574. We get a certain amount for the catechetical scene in the *Merry Wives* (IV, i). The first question which Sir Hugh Evans asks William is, "how many numbers is in nouns?" And p. 2 of the 1574 Grammar states the facts about "the numbers of nounes." "Lapis" is the first example of the third declension. The words at line 41 of the scene, "articles are borrowed of the pronoun and be thus declined : *singulariter nominativo, hic haec hoc*" occur on p. 3 of the Grammar. In line 76, Evans says, "show me some declensions of your pronouns"; on p. 10 we find the heading, "The declensions (*sic*) of pronounes."

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, i, 81, Costard says : "Go to ; thou hast it at dunghill, at the fingers' ends, as they say,"

to whom Holofernes : "O I smell false Latin ; dunghill for *unguem*." This may be a reminiscence of the "*carmen de moribus*" which is printed at the end of "the construction of the eight parts of speech," where among the other injunctions we find the line,—

"et quaecunque mihi reddis discantur ad unguem."

The play upon words may have been a schoolboy's, like "drunk himself out of his five sentences" in *Merry Wives*, I, i, 180.

In the *Taming of the Shrew*, I, i, 167, occurs the line,—

"redime te captum quam queas minimo."

This comes from the *Eunuchus* of *Terence* (I, i, 30), but in a different form ; Shakspeare got it not from *Terence*, but from the Grammar, where in its altered form it is given as an instance of the ablative of price without a substantive.

In *Twelfth Night* (II, iii, 2) we find the words, "*diluculo surgere*." This, as Malone pointed out, is to be found in the 1549 edition on p. 51, under the head of the "First Concorde."

Schmidt in his valuable "Shakespeare-lexicon" puts under the fourth head, *i.e.*, Latin phrases due to the author's invention : "*novi hominem tanquam te*."¹ But in the 1549 Grammar the phrase is to be found under the head of "*quasi*," etc., among adverbs. I may also add, that the phrase "*cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum*," which Schmidt puts under the third head (popular and proverbial phrases), occurs on the title-page of the 1549 edition, and may well have been seen by Shakespeare in his earliest studies.

Last of all in *Titus Andronicus* (IV, ii, 20) we find quoted the lines of Horace :

"integer vitæ scelerisque purus
non eget Mauri iaculis neque arcu.

¹ *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, i, 10.

Chiron on hearing them says : " O 'tis a verse in Horace ; I know it well ; I read it in the Grammar long ago." In Lily's Grammar, under the head "*De generibus carminum*," we find these two lines cited as an instance of the Sapphic metre.

But Malone gives us indirect evidence in his *Prolegomena* (vol. 2) for seeing no reason to doubt that Shakspeare knew a fair amount of Latin upon leaving school. It is certainly startling to find that his friend and senior, Mr. Richard Quiney, alderman of Stratford, received letters from his brother-in-law and fellow-alderman, Abraham Sturley, intermixed with sentences and even long paragraphs in Latin. Malone actually found an entire Latin letter addressed to him on business matters, when Mr. Quiney was on a visit to London. The Latin is not above reproach, it is true ; but how many aldermen of the Stratford of the present day either could or would write confidential letters in Latin ? But this is not all : Malone also found a Latin letter from Quiney's eldest son, Richard, to him, when on Corporation business in London. The letter was written in 1597—8, when the son was but eleven years old ; it may be read in Malone's appendix, No. 16.

This was a common exercise enjoined on the youth of those times, as appears from a quotation in Malone, from "the mastive or young whelp of the old dogge" (1615), where Doltas—

"Hath his grammar rules at's fingers' ende ;
Can write a 'pistle to his dad in Latin !

Enough Latin, therefore, to be able to write a letter, may fairly be assigned to Shakspeare before he left school.

Did he know Greek ? Dr. Farmer is at his best in ridiculing the scanty evidence in favour of the supposition that he did. Mr. Ruskin has pointed out the terrible irony of

Ophelia's¹ name if it be the Greek ὀφελία ; but we do not know whether Shakspeare meant this any more than we know whether he connected Desdemona with δυσδαίμων, as Mr. Hales suggests in his *Notes and Essays on Shakspeare*.

Mr. Hales' essay on the subject contains several interesting suggestions, but nothing very tangible. He asks whether Sycorax is for Syocorax (ὕς, κόραξ) and compares—

“As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd
With raven's feather”

with Prospero's words,—

“The son that she did litter here.”

Apemantus is found in the novel in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, and in North's translation of Plutarch's *Life of Antony*. Philostrate comes from the *Knight's Tale*, where it is the disguised Arcite's name. As to the Greek names in the *Winter's Tale*, Antigonus, Cleomenes, Archidamus, Dion, Autolycus, Dorcas, Leontes, all except the last two are found in Plutarch's lives. Shakspeare used this book largely elsewhere for his plots: in the *Winter's Tale* he discarded the names of the original story, but probably took the new ones out of Plutarch. Dorcas of course is biblical: and Leontes may come from some novel of the period.

Mr. Hales thinks the reference to Autolycus may come from Chapman's *Odyssey*, xix, 392-8. But will the date of that translation admit of such a reference? It is true that Shakspeare may have seen it in manuscript, just as he may have seen “W. W.'s” *Menæchmi*. It is more probable that Shakspeare is thinking of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid; xi, 312.

alipedis de stirpe dei versuta propago
nascitur Autolycus furtum ingeniosus ad omne ;
qui facere assuerat patriae non degener artis
candida de nigris et de candentibus atra

¹He probably found the name Ophelia in the older play, referred to by Nash in his preface to Green's *Menaphon* in 1587. It does not occur in “The History of Hamlet” the translation from Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*, which descends from *Saxo Grammaticus*.

Did the last line suggest *Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 220.

"Lawn as white as riven snow;
Cyprus black as e'er was crow."

When Shakspeare says in *Troilus and Cressida*¹ that Aristotle says young men are "unfit to hear moral philosophy," he is making the same mistake as Bacon in the *Advancement of Learning*.² That work appeared in 1605, *Troilus* in 1609. The inference is that Shakspeare read Bacon, not that Bacon wrote Shakspeare.

In *Timon*, IV, iii, 53, "I am misanthrōpos and hate mankind," the word comes from a marginal note in the old Plutarch: Antony. The scansion shows that Shakspeare knew no distinction of short and long *o*. More strange is *Timon*, II, ii, 20: "To the succession of new days this month," which looks like a reminiscence of the Greek *νοσημνία*, particularly as it in connection with debts. Steevens' note at the beginning of the play mentions a MS. play "in the possession of Mr. Strutt the engraver," which Shakspeare may have used for his play. "The piece itself (though it appears to be the work of an Academick) is a wretched one." If an "academick" wrote it, this would perhaps account for the allusion. But this we can hardly settle without unearthing the MS. play.

Other Greek words whose history might be investigated are: *periapts*³ (=περίπτα); *threne*;⁴ *phantasma*;⁵ *Ilion*, which occurs eight times in Shakspeare to *Ilium's* five, and *Action* for *Actium* in the first folio.⁶ These two latter words, however, are probably due to the printer, and should not be pressed to mean much. The general inference is that Shakspeare did not know Greek appreciably.

¹ *Troilus and Cressida*, II, ii, 166-167.

² Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, II, xxii, 13.

³ *Henry VI*, pt. 1, V, iii, 2. ⁴ *Phan. and Turtle*, 49. ⁵ *Julius Cæsar*, II, i, 65.

⁶ *Antony and Cleopatra*, III, vii, 52.

To return to Latin: on looking through the list of Latin words collected by Dr. Schmidt, it at once strikes the reader that most of them come from the ordinary language of the time; such words, for instance, as: *alias*, *armigero*, *ergo*, *imprimis*, *item*, *pauca*, *quasi*, *quondam*, *solus*, *verbatimim*, *videlicet*, and the quotation from Horace, "*ira furor brevis est*."¹ An unidentified phrase is in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, ii, 82: "*Vir sapit qui pauca loquitur*," which reads as if it ought to occur in some little book of "*sententiae*." "*Gelidus timor occupat artus*" in *Henry VI*, pt. 2, IV, i, 117, is not from Vergil, but very like what he has in *Æneid*, vii, 446. The current theology will account for *ave*, *benedicite*, *dives*, *medice te ipsum*, in *limbo patrum*, *non nobis*, *te Deum*. Medicine accounts for *hysterica passio* and *pia mater*; law for *præmunire*, *custos rotulorum*, etc.; astronomy for *ursa maior*; and heraldry for the mottoes in *Pericles*, II, ii, and such phrases as *invitis nubibus*,² *satis quod sufficit*,³ *semper idem*, *suum cuique*. Pageants, of which that celebrated in George Peele's *Polyhymnia* in 1590 is a type, may have easily suggested odd scraps of Latin to an observant spectator. It is noticeable that over a fourth of the single words quoted by Schmidt occur in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and most of them in the mouth of Holofernes, who is of course a careful character-sketch from the village pedant of the day.

The author of *Titus Andronicus* must have known the classics well, to judge by his frequent quotations, e.g.: "*integer vitæ*," etc.;⁴ "*magni dominator poli*";⁵ "*candidatus*."⁶ Again, a scholar alone could coin such phrases as

¹ *Timon of Athens*, I, ii, 28.

² *Henry VI*, pt. 2, IV, i, 99.

³ *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, i, 1.

⁴ *Titus Andronicus*, IV, ii, 20.

⁵ *Id.*, IV, i, 81. (*Seneca Hippol.*, ii, 671.)

⁶ *Id.*, I, i, 185.

"*ad manes fratrum*",¹ "*sit fas aut nefas*";² "*per Styga per manes vehor*";³ if indeed these be not rather hitherto unidentified quotations: again, "*stuprum*" is used in IV, i, 98, a word not occurring in the vocabulary of Lily's 1574 Grammar. Whether Shakspeare wrote this play or not is a point outside the range of this paper; but plainly the ratio of classical allusions and quotations in the play to the same things where they occur in undoubtedly genuine plays is no mean factor in the problem. It is enough to point out here that a play full to repletion of classical imagery and scraps of Latin is much what we might expect from a youth fresh from the grammar school of the provinces. It may be added that the false quantity of *Andronicus* is just what an inexact scholar who knew, like Shakspeare, a fair amount of Latin, would be apt to write. For analogy in Latin is all in favour of —*icus*.

It will be said: Why should not Shakspeare have continued his studies in after life? Instances of such devotion to the Classics are almost too numerous to be notable. Here our data are scanty; we do not know what sort of a library Shakspeare had; it may be that, like Landor, he never had more than a dozen books in the house at a time. Again, books were, of course, far dearer in his day than now. We only possess three books with his autograph, or supposed autograph. The first is a small folio copy of Florio's translation of *Montaigne's Essays*, purchased by the British Museum for £100. The second is an Aldine edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, now in the Bodleian. The third is a copy of the 1612 edition of North's *Plutarch*, now at Greenock.⁴ There is no reference to books in the poet's will, and anything like a private library in his days was a great rarity. We

¹ *Titus Andronicus*, I, i, 98. ² *Id.*, II, i, 132. ³ *Id.*, II, i, 135.

⁴ For which cf. *Greenock Advertiser*, Nov. 5, 1870.

know that he must have used the 1586 folio of Raphael Holinshed, and Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps has pointed out in connexion with *Coriolanus* IV, v, 86-90, that he probably used the 1595 edition of *Plutarch*, but they need not, of course have been his own copies. The 1595 *Plutarch* was brought out by his fellow-townsmen, Richard Field, who published *Venus and Adonis* for him in 1593. The same Richard Field published an edition of the *Metamorphoses* in 1589. He was presumably acquainted with the Classics, or had in his employ a clerk so acquainted, who may have supplied to Shakspeare the motto for *Venus and Adonis*, which comes from the *Amores*, i, 15, 35. So it is not necessary to suppose, with Mr. Hales, that Shakspeare read the *Amores* while in town between 1587 and 1592, though there is no doubt that *Venus and Adonis* is saturated with Ovidianism. This, at any rate, is a reasonable hypothesis, that the two fellow-townsmen saw a good deal of one another in London.

As we possess a copy of the *Metamorphoses* with Shakspeare's name in it, the question naturally suggests itself: Can we trace anything in Shakspeare to that poem? "*Terras Astraæ reliquit*" is quoted from i, 150, in *Titus Andronicus* IV, iii, 4. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is the book which Lavinia "tosseth so."¹ Titus takes the book and turns to the story of Philomela in the sixth book (l. 53):

"Forced in the ruthless vast and gloomy woods"
recalls a line in the original²—

"in stabula alta trahit silvis obscura vetustis."³

Progne is mentioned in *Titus Andronicus*, V, ii, 196. Is it too much to suppose that Shakspeare was studying the *Metamorphoses* in 1592, while writing, or re-writing, or helping to write, *Titus Andronicus*?

¹ *Titus Andronicus*, IV, i, 42.

² *Metamorphoses*, vi, 521.

³ Cf. also *Titus Andronicus*, II, iii, 43; II, iv, 26. 38-43.

It is, at any rate, noticeable that Semiramis is only mentioned in this play of all his writings.¹ She is mentioned in *Metamorphoses*, iv, 58; v, 85. The story of Actaeon² is found in *Metamorphoses*, iii, 230, and foll. In V, ii, 204, we read—

“This banquet, which I wish may prove
More stern and bloody than the Centaur’s feast.”

Compare *Metamorphoses*, xii, 220, and following, especially ll. 241–243. In II, iii, 231, we have a reference to Pyramus’ story. This story is only mentioned elsewhere in Shakspeare in the *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and comes from *Metamorphoses*, Book iv. We may even compare with “the pale moon” the “*quem procul ad lunae radios*” of Ovid, iv, 98, though the passage is not speaking of Pyramus, but of Thisbe. Finally, the name of Chiron, Tamora’s son, may have been suggested by *Metamorphoses*, vi, 126.

In the *Merchant of Venice*, III, ii, 55, reference is made to the legend of young Alcides (*Metamorphoses*, xi, 213) redeeming the virgin daughter of Laomedon from the sea-monster sent by the deceived Neptune. And in *King John*, V, vii, 25–27,—

“For you are born
To set a form upon that indigest
Which he hath left so shapeless and so rude.”

Metamorphoses i, 7 is clearly referred to, where Chaos is described as—

“rudis indigestaque moles.”

Certain references to Ovid’s other works occur in *Romeo and Juliet*, II, ii, 92, and *Taming of the Shrew*, III, i, 28. The former passage is—

“At lovers’ perjuries
They say Jove laughs.”

This comes from the *Ars Amandi*, i, 633 :—

“Jupiter . . . periuria ridet amantum.”

¹ *Titus Andronicus*, II, i, 22. iii, 118.

² *Id.* II, iii, 63.

In the latter, the epistle of Penelope to Ulysses is actually quoted.

“Hic ibat Simois : hic est Sigeia tellus ;
hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis.”

And in 3 *Henry VI*, I, iii, 48, Heroid. ii, 66 is quoted.

“di faciant laudis summa sit ista tuæ.”

It is probable, therefore, that Shakspeare knew his Ovid fairly well. Gervinus has noticed that if asked what he regarded as dramatic models, Shakspeare would have mentioned Plautus and Seneca : and we must not be shocked to conclude that he had no first-hand acquaintance with Vergil : Homer, of course, is out of the question.

Here we may notice that Shakspeare undoubtedly owed much to translations. In the *Tempest* (V, i, 33) Prospero says:—

“Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves.”

Warburton says this comes from Ovid's lines about Medea (*Metamorphoses*, vii, 197). So it did, but through the medium of translation. Arthur Golding translated the whole of the *Metamorphoses* in 1575, and in his book we read,—

“Ye ayres and winds ; ye elves of hills, of brookes, of woods alone,
of standing lakes, and of the night, approche ye everychone.”

“Standing lakes” is good testimony to Shakspeare's having used this translation.

Similarly *Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 75 is like Golding, Book XV, p. 196.

“Such noise as pine trees make what time the headdy easterne
wind doth whizz among them.”¹

On *Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 115, Steevens quotes Ovid, Ritson more wisely the translation:—

“While in this garden Proserpine was taking her pastime
In gathering either violets blue or lillies white as lime
Dis spied her—
The lady with a wailing voice afright did often call
Her mother—
And as she from the upper part her garment would have rent,
By chance she let her lap slip down, and out her flowers went.

¹ Quoted by Steevens.

It is instructive to notice how Shakspeare transmuted this doggerel into exquisite verse.

The portents in *Hamlet*, I, i, 113, and *Julius Cæsar*, II, ii, are based on Golding's *Metamorphoses*, Book xv, 779-798, and Plutarch's *Julius Cæsar*. *Hamlet* III, iv, 178,—

"I must be cruel only to be kind"

is very like Golding's rendering of Ovid's "*facto pius et sceleratus eodem*."

"For which he might both justly kind and cruel called be."¹

Similarly, Iris in the *Tempest*, IV, i, 76 comes from Phaer's *Æneid*, Book iv (1558), and *Hamlet*, III, iv, 56 from Phaer, iv, 246.

When we have exhausted the references to Ovid in Shakspeare, there is little more on this count to detain us. He seems to have known Seneca, doubtless in the quarto translation which appeared at London in 1581. Gervinus says, (p. 66) "Shakspeare was thoroughly acquainted with the works of Seneca: in his *Cymbeline*, after the manner of this poet, he makes the presiding deity appear and speak in the same antique metre in which Heywood and Studly had imitated the Latin tragedist." But there is nothing to show that Shakspeare used the original text of Seneca.²

Macbeth II, ii, 60 is also like *Lucr.*, vi, 1074, as Holt White has pointed out, and *Romeo and Juliet*, II, iii, 9, like *Lucr.*, v, 259, but the sentiment is an obvious one, and might have occurred to either poet. There was no known translation of *Lucretius* in Shakspeare's time into English: at the same time we must remember that translations in MSS. intended for private circulation only, may have supplied materials.

¹ Quoted by Steevens,

² Cf. Steevens' note on *King Lear*, II, iv, 283, which is like the translation of *Thyestes*, 269, and the famous passage in *Macbeth*, II, ii, 60, is like, but infinitely better than *Hercules Furens*, 1323. Comparison of the two passages is very significant.

Measure for Measure, II, ii, 114, has been compared with *Persius*, ii, 24; and *Hamlet*, V, i, 262, with *Persius*, i, 39. There was no translation, as far as we know, of *Persius* in Shakspeare's time. Both he and *Lucretius* are too hard for us to suppose, in default of stronger evidence, that Shakspeare had read the originals.

The same remarks apply to *Statius*, whom *Steevens* quotes (*Theb.*, x, 705) on *King Lear*, II, iv, 193.

In six passages Shakspeare refers to the *Natural History of Pliny*, which he no doubt read in the folio translation of *Philemon Holland*, which appeared at London in 1601 :—

<i>Tempest</i> , III, iii, 23,	refers to Book xiii, cap. 4.
<i>King Lear</i> , IV, vi, 183,	" " vii, <i>proœmium</i> .
<i>Othello</i> , III, iii, 453,	" " ii, cap. 97, last sentence.
<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> , II, ii, 318,	" " xxxv, cap. 10.
" " II, vii, 20,	" " v, cap. 9.
<i>Julius Cæsar</i> , II, i, 232	" " viii, cap. 8.

The question of Shakspeare's relation to *Plutarch* has been most fully gone into; the places where he varies from *North's* translation have all been investigated, as well as those where he follows his author in misprints or errors: but none has ever dared to assert that the variations in Shakspeare are due to the original Greek. The two best instances of his following *North* where he is wrong are: *Antony and Cleopatra*, III, vi, 10, "lower Syria, Cyprus, Lydia" (where *Lydia* should be *Libya*); *Julius Cæsar*, III, ii, 254, "on this side *Tiber*" (of *Cæsar's* gardens, contrary to the Greek text).

We must be careful not to assume that Shakspeare read *Plautus* merely because in the *Comedy of Errors* we get the plot of the *Menaechmi*, with a scene inserted from the *Amphitruo*, i.e., where *Antipholus of Ephesus* and his *Dromio* are shut out of their house. Previous English writers often supply the clue to a puzzle; thus some

supposed that *Tempest*, IV, i, 102, "I know her by her gait," i.e., Juno, was due to Vergil's "*Ast divum incedo regina*," but Steevens quotes from *The Arraignment of Paris*, 1584, "First statelie Juno with her port and grace," and Chapman (*Iliad*, ii), "the goddess of estate."

Again, it is perfectly justifiable to quote *Iliad*, vi, 483, *δακρύνειν γελάσασα* on *Richard II*, III, ii, 10, as a parallel passage, but as nothing more. Shakspeare writes—

"So weeping smiling greet I thee, my earth."

The apostrophe to "innocent sleep" in *Macbeth*, II, ii, 36, is like *Metamorphoses*, xi, 624–5, also an apostrophe to him—

"qui corda diurnis
fessa ministeriis mulcet."

But an appeal to sleep is surely a thing which can have occurred independently to two poets.¹ On *Tempest*, III, iii, Steevens quotes Phaer's *Æneid*, iii, merely because Ariel comes in as a Harpy. But there is no striking resemblance in the language used.

We may conclude that Shakspeare knew a fair amount of Latin on leaving school, and if he read any Classics in later life, read Ovid and Ovid only. And this choice need not surprise us. To begin with, Ovid is an easy and attractive writer. But in the second place, Ovid is in many ways just the poet who suits the genius of the Elizabethan age best. With all the vigour and youth which marked that illustrious epoch is subtly and unceasingly commingled a deep vein of sympathy with the "conceit." The Elizabethan writers are alone in combining the characteristics of the golden and the silver ages. Who will say that Shakspeare's taste is always faultless? Who fails after reading *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* to see that their unpruned luxuriance is exactly what would have

¹ *Seneca, Hercules Furens*, 1065 and following, is just such another apostrophe.

distinguished Ovid had that "*amator ingeni sui*" written in English?

Let us turn to the position of mythology and classical allusion in Shakspeare. It will not detain us long. It is, as a rule, fairly obvious, but not always accurate. We can see by a cursory inspection of the literature of the period that mythology was very much "in the air." The *Faerie Queene* alone would prove this; the mythology of that poem is not always either discreet or precise. Our best plan will be to collect instances in plays dating from various periods of the poet's life. In the first part of *Henry VI*, I, i, 56, Henry V is compared to Julius Cæsar; I, ii, 104, the Maid of Orleans is said to be "an Amazon," and in 144 "the bright star of Venus." In I, iv, 95, Talbot says he "will, like Nero, play on the lute, beholding the towns burn." In I, vi, 21, occur the lines—

"A statelier pyramis to her I'll rear
Than Rhodope's or Memphis' ever was."

In I, vi, 25, allusion is made to "the rich-jewell'd coffer of Darius." In II iii, 6, Scythian Tomyris is mentioned; II, iii, 19-20, Hercules and Hector; III, ii, 64, Hecate; IV, vi, 54, and vii, 16, Icarus and Daedalus; V, iii, 188, the Labyrinth and Minotaur. Compare also IV, vii, 60, Alcides; IV, vii, 78, Nemesis; V, iii, 35, Circe; V, v, 104, Paris. The evidence of all this, as to whether Shakspeare knew Latin, is very little when we remember what good use John Keats made of Lemprière. *Titus Andronicus* teems with mythology: to give a few examples, we have in I, i, 80, Priam's sons; 88, Styx; 136, Hecuba; 177, Solon's paradox; 226, Titan's rays; 316, Phoebe; 325, Hymenæus; 379, Ajax's burial: II, i, 17, Prometheus on Caucasus; 22, Semiramis; 108, Lucrece: II, iii, 23, Aeneas and Dido; 63, Actæon and Diana; 231, Pyramus: III, i, 242, Aetna: III, ii, 27, Aeneas: IV, i, 52, Philomela: IV, iii, 68,

Coriolanus: V, 2, 204, Centaur's feast: V, iii, 84, Priam and Sinon. Here again there is nothing recondite; the allusions are what must have been familiar to all who had culture.

In *As You Like It*, to take a play of another period, the classical allusions are few and far between. In I, i, we have the "golden world": I, iii, 77, Juno's swans; 127, Ganymede: III, ii, 187, Pythagoras' time; 250, Jove's tree (the oak): III, iii, 11, Jove in a thatched house, and Ovid among the Goths: IV, i, 48, Cupid; 95, Troilus and Leander; 210, Cupid again: V, ii, 34, "Cæsar's thrasonical brag": V, iv, Hymen, and Juno as goddess of marriage. Here the only thing out of the way is the reference to Philemon and Baucis: this may be due to *Metamorphoses*, viii, 631.¹

Take the *Tempest* as an instance of Shakspeare's latest manner: we find but few allusions, and those ordinary ones. We have in I, ii, 201, Jove's lightnings, and 204, Neptune's trident; II, 1, "widow Dido"; III, 2, Ariel entering like a Harpy: IV, i, 30, Phœbus' steeds. Iris, Ceres, and Juno; 89, dusky Dis and the story of Proserpine; 93, Paphos; 128, Naiads: V, i, 45, Jove's oak.

All is trite here, and does not involve much knowledge of the classics. We need not attach much weight to the mistakes made by Shakspeare, for it was an inaccurate age. Here are a few specimens:—

As You Like It, III, ii, 77, "Juno's swans," should be "Venus'."
Antony and Cleopatra, IV, xii, "Dido and her Aeneas," should be "Sichæus."

Henry V, V, ii, 467, "*très cher*," and thus in Latin "*præclarissimus*."
 (This mistake starts in Holinshed. Cf. Ed. 1577, vol. 2, p. 1207, § 25.)

Troilus and Cressida, V, ii, 151,
 "Admits no orifex for a point as subtle
 As Ariachne's broken woof to enter."

Confusion of the names Arachne and Ariadne.

¹ Cf. *Much Ado about Nothing*, II, i, 100.

There is far more use of classical allusion in the more youthful and doubtful plays: but there is quite enough scattered up and down the genuine plays to allow of our making this conclusion: that by itself our author's power of classical allusion does not lead us to suppose he obtained it for himself, but rather that he utilized the floating education of the day.

But a third more intricate question remains behind, which we can do little more than adumbrate here. An author's reading and studies affect the words and phrases he uses when he is at least conscious of the fact. Can we ascertain from a study of the diction of Shakspeare whether he was a classical scholar? The knowledge of his works and of contemporary writers, required for embarking on such a task as this, would of necessity be immense. The labour of such an undertaking would lie chiefly in finding whether Shakspeare used many words found in no previous author, which are directly and correctly formed from Latin. Dr. Murray's colossal dictionary of the English language will be of cardinal value in settling this question. Allowance would have to be made for the be-Latinized condition of the language at the time; how much only the most eminent scholars could settle. The sort of words and expressions which the student should investigate may be guessed from a few random instances here subjoined:—

<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	I, i, 182,	palliant.
" "	I, i, 27,	accited (2 <i>Henry IV</i> , V, ii, 141).
" "	II, i, 120,	"sacred wit," where sacred = accursed, as in <i>Æneid</i> , iii, 57, "auri sacra fames."
" "	II, iii, 235,	receptacle.
1 <i>Henry VI</i>	I, iii, 31,	"proditor of the realm."
2 <i>Henry VI</i>	I, i, 3,	procurator.
<i>Macbeth</i>	V, iii, 43,	oblivious antidote (cf. <i>obliviosus</i> in <i>Hor. Odes</i> , II, vii, 21).
<i>Henry VIII</i>	II, iv, 48,	"one the wisest prince" (cf. Vergil's " <i>iustissimus unus</i> ." — <i>Æn.</i> , ii, 426).

<i>Tempest</i>	II, i, 120,	basis.
"	III, i, 37,	admired Miranda.
"	IV, i, 18,	aspersion.
"	V, i, 244,	and there is in this business more than nature was ever conduct of.
<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	Prol. ii,	orgulous.
"	I, iii, 9,	tortive.
"	I, iii, 20,	protractive.
"	I, iii, 21,	persistive.
"	I, iii, 87,	insisture.
"	I, iii, 105,	dividable (= ? <i>dissociabilis</i>).
"	I, iii, 111,	oppugnancy.
"	I, iii, 127,	neglection.
"	I, iii, 356,	directive.
"	II, ii, 58,	attributive.
"	II, ii, 71,	unrespective.
"	II, ii, 121,	deject.
"	II, ii, 133,	propension.
"	III, iii, 43,	unplausible.
"	III, iii, 198,	uncomprehensive.
"	IV, v, 124,	commixtion.
"	IV, v, 129,	multipotent.
"	IV, v, 142,	mirable.
"	IV, v, 250,	prenominate.
"	IV, v, 272,	convive.
"	V, ii, 173,	constringed.
"	V, ii, 151,	orifex.
<i>Richard III</i>	IV, i, 10,	gratulate.
<i>Othello</i>	I, i, 110,	nephews (= <i>nepotes</i>).
"	I, iii, 140,	antre.
"	III, iii, 23,	I'll watch him tame.
<i>2 Henry IV</i>	IV, iv, 119,	mure.
<i>Julius Cæsar</i>	IV, iii, 2,	note (= <i>notare censoris ritu</i>).
<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	II, vi, 7,	obliged (= bound).
<i>Hamlet</i>	I, i, 121,	precurse.
"	I, i, 154,	extravagant (and erring spirit).
"	V, iv, 57,	perdurable. (<i>Othello</i> , I, iii, 343 ; <i>Measure for Measure</i> , III, i, 115.)
<i>All's Well that Ends Well</i>	IV, iii, 340,	pestiferous.
<i>King Lear</i>	III, iv, 69,	pendulous.
<i>Taming of the Shrew</i>	III, i, 50,	pedascul (sham Latin vocative).
<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	II, v, 51,	precedence (= "what goes before").
<i>Cymbeline</i>	II, v, 11,	pudency.
<i>Timon of Athens</i>	I, i, 11,	continue (adj.)

Many more instances could easily be found by going through the Shakspeare lexicons. It is of course not asserted that all the words alluded to are directly formed from corresponding Latin words. With many this is not the case, but where we find Shakspeare first employed a word (and in some cases he employed them last as well as first) it is asserted that probably acquaintance with Latin led him to coin the words, at any rate, from Latin roots, though the terminations may not always be accurately formed. It is not contended that "contraction" in *Hamlet*, III, iv, 46, for "marriage-contract" is so used because of any Latin use of *contractio*; but that only a scholar would have ventured on using "contraction" instead of "contract." Similarly with "*prolixious*" for "*prolix*" in *Measure for Measure*, II, iv, 162. In some cases the problem to investigate would be odd uses of ordinary English words, such as are in the above list:—sacred, oblivious, nephews, note, obliged, precedence.

It is time to bring this discussion to a close. Its conclusions are neither startling nor definite; the facts whence they are drawn are not clear-cut enough to admit of their being so. The subject is however one of great interest, both in itself and as regards its collateral points. The classical allusions of Shakspeare may help us in deciding the date of all the plays and the genuineness of some. They throw a side-light on the culture and scholarship of the Elizabethan age. They suggest comparison between Shakspeare and his dramatic rivals, such as Ben Jonson, on the one side: and on the other, with the great poets of all time, such as Milton. Could Milton have written *Paradise Lost*, had he never read *Vergil* or *Homer*? Would Shakspeare have dared to write *Hamlet*, *Othello*, or *Lear*, if he had known the great plays of ancient Greece? Finally, a comparison of the Shaksperian critics of this age

with their predecessors in the eighteenth century may well be worked out in this field, not always in favour of the former.

Admiration for Shakspeare leads us into occasional by-paths, some of which are circuitous, some obscure, while in others there is absolutely "no thoroughfare." But there are other paths through which, after winding, we attain to gentle eminences and survey thence the immediate neighbourhood. The present subject is one path in the great Shaksperian labyrinth : but it is worth our while to thread this maze : for it reveals us something of the poet's mind. Let those who declaim about the "book of nature," and refuse to believe that Shakspeare owed anything to study other than that of his fellow creatures, remember that airy generalities are the food of the chameleon : we "would fain have meat : " it is right that we should be jealous in investigating every detail belonging to such a man.

A. H. CRUICKSHANK.

THE PUNS OF SHAKESPEARE :

A DIGEST OF AN INVESTIGATION
INTO THE RATIONALE AND FREQUENCY OF THEIR USE.

THE PUNS OF SHAKESPEARE.

“SIR!” replied the eminent lexicographer, “the man that will make a pun will pick a pocket!” “A pun,” says the Cyclopædia, “is a verbal quibble, used in place of wit by those destitute of sense.” Whether or no the morals of the Elizabethan dramatists were better than those of the Georgian pickpocket is a matter of opinion; but that common sense, humour, and brilliant wit were characteristics that distinguished them among writers of all ages, is a statement few would care to dispute. How then are we to account for the anomalous fact, that (with the doubtful exception of the late H. J. Byron and his followers) they were also the greatest punsters that ever lived? When ideas utterly distinct are brought by some bond into connection we derive enjoyment. The depth of our pleasure varies with the strength of the bond. Language affords men a means of thus associating different ideas, either by the similarity of the words that express those ideas, or by the different meanings that may be attached to one word. So soon as men obtained a mastery over language they began to please their audience in this manner. Even Aristotle and Cicero praise the use of the pun, while by Vergil it is sublimed into poetry. But the test of a true piece of wit is translation into another language. If the wit be in the thought it remains, if merely

in the words it vanishes : a pun is "*vox et præterea nihil*." This was recognised by Quintilian and Longinus, and later writers acquiesced in their distinction. But with the revival of letters came the revival of false wit : Englishmen discovered what a wonderful instrument their language was, and they delighted to play on it ; what wonder if they occasionally played with it ! Later critics again showed how superficial was the humour of the pun, and once more it disappears from all literary productions. The Commentators on Shakespeare, almost without exception, fall foul of the pun ; but no amount of censure can prevent our recognition of it as a pervading element in Elizabethan literature, and as an important factor in the method of our early dramatists.

The development of the individual repeats in little the development of the race. Just as the pun, for reasons above mentioned, fell into disuse among dramatists, so it may be expected to show a gradual decline in the works of him who, more than any other, is the representative of those dramatists. That this is largely the case has been recognised as a general principle by those who study Shakespeare's plays from a chronological stand-point. Thus Dowden writes : " Shakespeare's early conceits, *puns*, frequent classical allusions, occasional over-wrought rhetoric, all gradually disappear or subside ; but these changes really belong to the growth of Shakespeare's taste and judgment." Still no one has hitherto attempted the scientific method of bringing this theory to the bar of fact. On the contrary, all would say with Dowden : " These are things that cannot be precisely weighed and measured, although they can be clearly felt." Fleay, for instance, says of his metrical test, that in it, and in it *only*, can quantitative results be obtained.

The present essay attempts to show how the statistical

and scientific method may be applied to one of the points mentioned by Dowden ; preliminary results arising from a complete study of Shakespeare's verbal jests and quibbles are here laid before the reader. Did no more result

from the investigation than a confirmation of our *à priori* hypothesis, it would still be of value as lending support to purely æsthetic criticism. And this support is needed, for the æsthetic sense alone is often deceived. For instance, Dowden, exemplifying the contrast of characters in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, writes : "The *bright* and *clever* Sylvia is set over against the tender and ardent Julia ; the clown Speed, notable as a *verbal wit* and *quibbler*, is set over against the humorous Launce." After reading the words I have italicised, we are a little surprised to learn that, whereas Julia quibbles eleven times, Sylvia only quibbles once. The contrast may exist, but it does not lie in the quality of *wit*. As regards Speed and Launce Dowden has more right on his side, for Speed makes twenty puns and Launce makes but—nineteen. To the fine æsthetic sense of Professor Dowden this doubtless appears great opposition. Another æsthetic critic,

Mrs. Montagu, is thus quoted by Bishop Wordsworth : "As Falstaff, whom the author certainly intended to be perfectly witty, is less addicted to quibble and play on words than any of his comic characters, I think we may fairly conclude he was sensible it was but a false kind of wit, which he practised from the hard necessity of the times." What are the facts? In 1 *King Henry IV* there are forty-seven puns ; of these Falstaff makes twenty-one, Prince Hal ten, Hotspur eight : in 2 *King Henry IV* there are fifty-two puns ; Falstaff leads with twenty-seven, Prince Hal is again a bad second with six : in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* there are thirty-nine puns, of which eleven are credited to Falstaff, this being twice as many as are made

by anyone else in the comedy. No character in the whole of Shakespeare's plays, or in those of any contemporary dramatist with which I am acquainted, exceeds Falstaff in quibbling. Were Sir John alive to read the above-quoted remark of Mrs. Montagu, he would surely once more ejaculate, "Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying!" Many such errors could be cited, but I do not wish to make a reputation, as did the Variorum Commentators, by vilifying critics of superior judgment: enough has been said to show reason for the existence of this essay.

Whatever be the exact order in which Shakespeare wrote his plays, we can ascribe them with probability to four main periods. These doubtless correspond with events and stages in the author's life, and are: I, the period of apprenticeship; II, a period of manly vigour; III, a gloom-period; IV, period of final calm. According to the theory, a gradual decrease of puns is to be expected in successive periods. The following are the proportions actually found:—I, 2.12; II, 1.36; III, .49; IV, .48. These numbers are calculated from those plays alone which are undoubtedly by Shakespeare; see the Table on page 74. Or, to give an example of two comedies from each period:—

I. <i>Love's Labour's Lost</i> ...	3.97	<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> ...	3.70
II. <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> ...	1.42	<i>As You Like It</i> ...	1.29
III. <i>All's Well that Ends Well</i>61	<i>Measure for Measure</i>74
IV. <i>Cymbeline</i>18	<i>Winter's Tale</i>26

It is necessary to explain how these numbers are calculated. The play is read with extreme care; every jest that depends on words alone, every double meaning, and every quibble, is noted. Many puns escape notice, but these are usually detected afterwards by analogous undoubted puns in other plays, either by Shakespeare or by contemporary

authors. The lines are then counted in the Globe edition, and the number of puns per 100 lines determined: this reduces all to a common standard. The necessity for this will be made clear by an example: there are forty puns in *Much Ado About Nothing*, thirty-seven in *Comedy of Errors*; but there are only 1776 lines in the latter play, and 2825 in the former, so that the percentages are—*Comedy of Errors*, 2.08; *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1.42.

So far, our theory has been corroborated by the evidence brought forward. Can we go further? I do not believe that, in the absence of external evidence, a true chronological order can ever be based upon consideration of one point alone, whether it be feminine endings, rhymes, or puns. Such an attempt reminds one of the classifications of animals made by the old Naturalists, according to variations in the structure of only one organ. Still, the following list of the plays, in an order determined by decrease of puns, presents many points of interest. Plays of doubtful authorship are put in brackets, as they would invalidate the conclusions.

This coincides in the main with chronological lists usually accepted. A few points of difference may be considered. *Merry Wives of Windsor* comes very high up. If the old story be true it was of course written after *Henry IV*, in 1597, and it seems to have been revised so late as 1604. Hence it is out of place. This may be because, unlike the other comedies, it has no serious interest whatever: it is little more than a farce. Besides, certain passages seem to show that it may have been sketched out by the author at an earlier date; namely, the bitter allusions to Sir T. Lucy, his coat of arms, and the deer stealing. The large number of Latin words is characteristic of early plays. The legend says that it was written in a fortnight. *Troilus and Cressida* also comes too soon,

TABLE OF PLAYS,
ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF PUNS.

Place in Chrono- logy.	Place according to Puns.		No. of Puns.	No. of Lines.	No. of Puns per 100 lines.
1	1	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i> . . .	107	2690	3.97
3	2	<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> . . .	84	2269	3.70
12	3	<i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i> . . .	39	1815	2.14
2	4	<i>Comedy of Errors</i> . . .	37	1776	2.08
4	5	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> . . .	63	3051	2.06
[15a	5a	<i>Taming of the Shrew</i> . . .	50	2657	1.88]
5	6	<i>King John</i> . . .	42	2570	1.63
7	7	<i>Merchant of Venice</i> . . .	41	2658	1.54
8	8	1 <i>King Henry IV</i> . . .	47	3177	1.48
9	9	2 <i>King Henry IV</i> . . .	52	3507	1.48
13	10	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> . . .	40	2825	1.42
14	11	<i>As You Like It</i> . . .	36	2847	1.29
[20b	11a	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i> . . .	43	3503	1.22]
17	12	<i>Hamlet</i> . . .	40	3929	1.02
24	13	<i>Tempest</i> . . .	21	2062	1.01
15	14	<i>Twelfth Night</i> . . .	27	2691	1.00
6	15	<i>Richard II</i> . . .	25	2756	.90
10	16	<i>Henry V</i> . . .	31	3483	.88
16	17	<i>Measure for Measure</i> . . .	21	2813	.74
[14a	17a	2 <i>King Henry VI</i> . . .	23	3163	.72]
[20c	17b	<i>Timon of Athens</i> . . .	15	2322	.65]
[6a	17c	<i>Richard III</i> . . .	23	3580	.64]
18	18	<i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> . . .	18	2943	.61
20	19	<i>King Lear</i> . . .	19	3333	.57
[13a	19a	<i>Julius Cæsar</i> . . .	14	2457	.56]
[4a	19b	1 <i>King Henry VI</i> . . .	15	2647	.56]
11	20	<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> . . .	11	2066	.53
22	21	<i>Coriolanus</i> . . .	15	3402	.44
[25a	21a	<i>Henry VIII</i> . . .	11	2821	.38]
19	22	<i>Othello</i> . . .	12	3315	.36
[20a	22a	<i>Macbeth</i> . . .	7	2137	.33]
25	23	<i>Winter's Tale</i> . . .	8	2975	.26
[21a	23a	<i>Pericles</i> . . .	5	2387	.20]
21	24	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> . . .	6	3060	.19
23	25	<i>Cymbeline</i> . . .	6	3340	.18
[0a	25a	<i>Titus Andronicus</i> . . .	4	2513	.15
[3a	25b	3 <i>King Henry VI</i> . . .	4	2798	.14]
37 Plays.			Total	1062	104,338
					1.017

for Dowden dates it 1603, while both he and Fleay fix its final revision at 1607. The number of puns favours Fleay's idea that it was written at different periods, beginning in 1594: if this be true it is here found in its right place.

The Tempest (1610) has a large proportion of puns; but we must not be surprised to find that some of the plays written in the last period should show a reaction from the gloom of those that come "out of the depths." Referring to page 72 it will be seen that the rate of decrease is less for the last period: the pun-curve, which has on the whole descended with an even gradient, now lessens and even shows a tendency to rise. This was to be expected.

Richard II must have been written before *Henry IV*; Malone and Fleay date it 1593, Dowden, 1594: *Richard III* was probably written before *Richard II*. These two plays were however written under the very strong influence of Marlowe; readers of that poet will understand why they should therefore be free from puns. But the Euripidean dialogue in *Richard III*, and the general inaptness of the puns in *Richard II*, are a set-off against their numerical weakness.

Midsummer Night's Dream comes twenty-fourth on my list; yet all critics, except Chalmers, give it a very early date, 1592-4. The play is however very different in character from any other play of Shakespeare's. It is more in the style of a masque; it is a poem, and written in rhyme for the most part. The rhymes can be no argument for a very early date. In any case the play is so anomalous that we need not regard it as upsetting any of our results.

Those results, so far as the present investigation has gone, I take to be that puns afford a valuable check on, or confirmation of, purely æsthetic criticism; and that they constitute important internal evidence as to the chronology of the plays.

So far, however, the examination is merely in its preliminary stage. "Mathematics" writes Professor Huxley, "are like a mill; what comes out depends on what you put in." Puns are of such varied character, and are so differently employed, that for a true estimate a classification is necessary. There are two modes of classifying things, namely,—

I. PHYSIOLOGICAL, according to function.

II. MORPHOLOGICAL, according to structure.

By method I we consider whether the pun has a dramatic use or no; by method II we determine whether a pun is in itself good or bad. It is a trite paradox that the worst puns are the best. Hence the physiological method is more important in literary, as opposed to grammatical criticism. The following sketch is intended to show the lines that should be followed in a more thorough investigation.

I.—PHYSIOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION — Arrangement of Puns according to their Dramatic Purpose.

A.—Puns WITH *Dramatic use*.

B.—Puns WITHOUT *Dramatic use*.

This primary separation demands great care. There are so many ways in which a pun can be used with effect, that one hesitates to stigmatise any as entirely purposeless. Turn, for example, to *King John*, II, i, 533, where the Dauphin Lewis is being betrothed to Blanch:—

K. Philip.—It likes us well; young princes, close your hands.

Austria.—And your lips too; for I am well assured

That I did so when I was first *assured*.

"Assured" had the meaning of "affianced," as we learn from *Comedy of Errors*:—

"Called me Dromio, swore I was assured to her."

Bishop Wordsworth is excited by this pun to a long note: "The intelligent reader, it is believed, would gladly part

with such quibbles as this, which here and elsewhere disfigure the present play," etc. Walker, too, takes such exception to this pun that he would correct the second "assured" to "affied." Yet the pun is not wholly out of place in the mouth of Austria; it is not the only bad pun he makes, he is the butt of The Bastard, and he is certainly trying to be funny. The same pun occurs in *Taming of the Shrew*, IV, iv, 91, and *Hamlet*, V, i, 125.

A.—*Puns WITH Dramatic use* are further divided according to (1) Character and (2) Incident.

1.—**Puns of Character:—**

a.—Light Comedy. Punsters are not rare, even in modern life; and in Shakespeare's day the fine gentleman that could not turn his words inside out like a cheveril glove was esteemed but a poor fellow. Here come Biron and Rosaline, Benedick and Beatrice, and Mercutio.

b.—Low Comedy: but these must be made by genuine humorists, such as Launcelot, Launce, and Speed. There is an idea that the Fool, as fully developed by Shakespeare, trusts less to puns than to real humour. Launce makes nineteen puns, Launcelot ten, and Touchstone seven; further, the puns made by Touchstone are far superior to those of Launce and Launcelot. Decrease in quantity and increase in quality was, however, to be expected on other grounds. Still it is the case that the proportion relative to puns made by other characters diminishes in the ratio of 10 : 8 : 7. The idea has, therefore, a small basis of fact.¹

c.—Puns of a Diseased Brain. As a rule the character seizes on some prominent word, or runs off at a tangent along a secondary line of thought thereby suggested. When Lear cries out on "Those pelican daughters,"

¹ To obtain correct results it was necessary to count Speed and Launce as one Fool, and to proceed by Rule of Three accordingly.

"Pillicock sat on Pillicock hill" sings Edgar in the person of Mad Tom. So, too, Hamlet, when he would seem mad, mistakes Polonius. Frequently, however, these puns are most appropriate—"a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of"—such, for the most part, are the puns of the really mad Fool in *King Lear*.

d.—Puns of a Weak Mind: a very interesting class, more apparent in the later plays.

(i) Showing poverty of true humour in the person that makes them. Thus in the *Tempest*, the wit of Antonio and Sebastian is of the lowest grade, the jokes never rise above puns, nor the laughter above sarcasm. This is in true harmony with the characters of those dull villains. Antonio's wit is solely directed to render the good ridiculous, and to make the descent to wickedness easy for Sebastian (Coleridge). Compare the weak quibbles of Morocco in *Merchant of Venice*, II, vii.

(ii) Showing deficiency of intellect or education. Such most notably are all those of Hostess Quickly, who continually mistakes words, and many of Costard's in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

2.—Puns of Incident.

a.—Art *versus* Nature. Puns and conceits are, like rhyme, often introduced in opposition to earnest sentences. They contrast the false with the true. In *Much Ado* Benedick is a punster, Claudio rarely puns; but in V, i, where Benedick comes in earnest to challenge Claudio, it is the latter, alone, that jests and quibbles. "What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit!"

b.—The Pun Passionate. As converse of the above, the very fiercest feelings of our nature may provoke punning. This is the pun of scorn and anger, and the pun, closely

allied, of contempt. Perhaps the most interesting of all to the psychologist (for man is never so natural as when in a rage), the Pun of Passion has been so fully discussed in the "Shakespeare Key" that further comment is needless. Under this head fall many of Hotspur's puns: those of Gratiano in the Trial-Scene, and puns referring to Wolsey in *Henry VIII*.

c.—The Pun Pathetic. This also is dwelt upon in the "Shakespeare Key": its use may be defended on two grounds: (i) it is a contrast to the melancholy of the scene, (ii) punning is a natural safety valve of feeling.

"Misery makes sport to mock itself,"

and

"How oft when men are at the point of death
Have they been merry, which their keepers call
A lightning before death!"

Shakespeare has written few lines of greater pathos than Mercutio's,—

"Ask for me to-morrow and you shall find me a *grave* man."

—*Romeo and Juliet*, III, i, 101.

d.—Puns of Contrast, pure and simple. To see the force with which a pun can be used, one has only to turn to *Macbeth*, II, ii, 55.

"If he do bleed,
I'll *gild* the faces of the grooms withal;
For it must seem their *guilt*."

The sudden introduction of a jest amid the weird terrors of the scene startles us: it is a gleam of ghastly sunshine that suddenly strikes across a stormy landscape.

B.—Puns WITHOUT *dramatic use* :—

Many of the puns in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* would be classed here. For practical purposes it might also be advisable to place all puns used in excess on this side of the line; e.g., Juliet's string of puns on "that bare vowel 'I'" (*Romeo and Juliet*, III, ii,

43-51): it is however possible to regard this instance as an example of *εἰρωνεία*, for Juliet is bemoaning the death of the living Romeo; true tragedy would have been inartistic. Undramatic puns obviously admit of no physiological sub-division.

II.—MORPHOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION—Arrangement of Puns according to method of punning.

The literary value of this method, though less than that of Method I, is enhanced by its dealing with matters that admit of more exact measurement.

A.—According to the *Simple Structure of the Pun* itself.

1.—**Repetition of the word or a very similar word in a different sense.**

a.—With some meaning and wit, *e.g.*:—

“Not on thy *sole*, but on thy *soul*, harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen.”

—*Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 123.

b.—An inane repetition:—

“Master *person*,—quasi *pers-one*—

And if one should be *pierced*, which is the one?”

—*Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, ii, 85.

2.—**Receiving the word in a different sense to that intended by the first speaker, replying at cross purposes.**

a.—Intentionally:—

Armado.—A most fine *figure*.

Moth.—To prove you a cypher.

—*Love's Labour's Lost*, I, ii, 58.

b.—Through simplicity:—

Shallow.—The council shall *hear* it; it is a riot.

Evans.—It is not meet the council *hear* a riot.

—*Merry Wives of Windsor*, I, i, 35.

In this case the speaker can hardly be credited with any humour, often indeed may be a simple ass.

3.—**The Double Meaning.** Using a word in its natural sense, but with implied allusion to another meaning, which

hidden meaning is often brought out more strongly by metaphor, *e.g.* :—

“If justice cannot tame you, she shall ne’er weigh more *reasons* in her balance.”—*Much Ado*, V, i, 209.

“Reason” was pronounced like “raisin.” *Cf.* :—

“If *reasons* were as plentiful as blackberries.”

—1 *King Henry IV*, II, iv, 263.

A variety of this kind comes under the head of *εἰρωνεία* ; *e.g.* :—

Drom. E.—Here’s that, I warrant you, will *pay* them all.

Comedy of Errors, IV, iv, 9.

“Pay” means “to beat,” as we learn from *Twelfth Night*, III, iv, 305 ; and in this sense Dromio here uses the word, but his master would naturally expect it to refer to money.

B.—According to the *Introduction of the Pun* :—

A division of the subject which might appropriately be styled its Embryology. It is an easy matter to pun, but not so easy to pun with grace. For the punster, whether on or off the stage, *ars est celare artem*.

1.—A pun may be brought out in the most barefaced manner, with no attempt at wit.

a.—The punster puns on a word of his own :—

Speed.—To *testify* your bounty, I thank you, you have *testerned* me.—*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I, i, 152.

b.—He puns on a word used by another speaker :—

Romeo.—In such a case as mine a man may *strain courtesy*.

Mercutio.—That’s as much as to say—such a case as yours *constrains* a man to bow in the hams.

Romeo.—Meaning to *courtisy* ?

Mercutio.—Thou hast most kindly hit it.

Romeo.—A most *courteous* exposition. Etc., etc., etc.

—*Romeo and Juliet*, II, iv, 40-108.

It must be confessed that Elizabethan dramatists are beaten hollow by writers of modern burlesque in the running of puns to death. Not that this is to the dis-

advantage of the Elizabethans ; it is to modern librettists that some would apply the words of Dryden :—

“ Insipid jesters, and unpleasant fools ;
A corporation of dull punning drolls.”

2.—**The pun may be palpably led up to, and introduced most artificially ; still there is art.** The key-word of the pun, or the phrase introducing it, is unusual, and evidently dragged in. So in *Much Ado*, I, i, 57 :—

Messenger.—*Stuffed* with all honourable virtues.

Beatrice.—It is so indeed : he is no less than a stuffed man ; but for the stuffing—well, we are all mortal.

“ A stuffed man ” was a cuckold. Cf. this play III, iv, 64.

3.—**The pun may grow naturally out of the dialogue :**

Curio.—Will you go hunt, my lord ?

Duke.—What Curio ?

Curio.—The *hart*.

Duke.—Why so I do, the noblest that I have.

—*Twelfth Night*, I, i, 16.

By constructing such schemes of classification as the two here given, we are enabled to analyse the puns of a given play with more certainty. The two methods must be applied separately, and the mean of their results taken. Broadly speaking, plays in which the puns are subordinated to dramatic effect of the highest kind, in which they are pointed and artistically worked up to, are presumed to be of later date than those in which the puns are merely to raise a laugh from the groundlings, and are introduced without literary or dramatic skill. Such analyses are rarely found to run counter to our previous calculations : when they do, it is always in the direction of what, on other grounds, is seen to be the truth. To my readers I commend the interesting task of analysing the plays and constructing fresh tables : but it is clear that this method should only be used as a secondary, determinant test ; for æsthetic prejudice cannot but affect the result, and there is a personal equation for each critic.

Much work has been done that cannot be set forth here, but much more remains to be done. When Shakespeare has been worked through, it will be advantageous, if not necessary, to compare him with contemporary dramatists. Indeed, a knowledge of them is essential to an understanding of Shakespeare's own puns. In scientific phraseology that must appear pedantic to many, I have discussed the Physiology, Morphology, and Embryology of the Pun. The study of living creatures under these three aspects led to the theory of Evolution; by a similar study of puns we have traced the development of one side of Shakespeare's genius, and it is sometimes possible by comparative studies to follow the evolution of particular puns. Just as certain catchwords of modern plays never fail to raise a laugh, so the merest hint at a jest already well-known to the Elizabethan audience would suffice to recall their former amusement. A prolific and popular writer would no more think of elaborating each time a common pun, than we should think of completing a trite quotation or hackneyed proverb. Shakespeare seems hardly ever to use the word "horn" without a sly allusion to a subject perfectly familiar to all his hearers. His modern readers, who have not perhaps that "extensive and peculiar knowledge" of old stage literature and older ballads, possessed by *habitués* of the Globe, may be excused for sometimes missing the point of a double meaning. Here is a simple case, in *Lear*, I, ii, 149 :—

Edmund.—O these eclipses do portend these divisions!
fa, sol, la, mi.

Over this the commentators quarrel without seizing the point. It is simply a pun like that in *Romeo and Juliet*, III, v, 29 :—

"Some say the lark makes sweet *division*;
This doth not so, for she *divideth* us."

With this compare Middleton, *Your Five Gallants*, V, i:—

“You have more cause to join
And play the grounds of friendship 'mongst yourselves,
Than rashly run *division*.”

“The grounds” = an air on which variations and divisions were to be made. A “division” = a number of quick notes sung to one syllable, and of this Edmund gives a specimen in four notes. Is not the second “these” a copyist’s or compositor’s error? It is probable that the audience at *As You Like It* found a pun in Jaques’ simple answer to Orlando (II, vii, 98):—

Orl.—He dies that touches any of this fruit
Till I and my affairs are answered.

Jaq.—An you will not be answered with *reason*, I must die.

We have already seen that “reason” was pronounced “rāson.” Staunton therefore conjectures “reasons,” supposing that the fruit was raisins.

No one who analyses the puns of Shakespeare will fail to see how, at least in his mature plays, he suits the method of punning to the character. Thus the puns of Touchstone are good but artificial, strongly contrasted with the perversely bad puns made by Jaques, the wrathful puns of Orlando, and the natural, merry puns of Rosalind. There are forty verbal jests in *Hamlet*, twenty-four being plain and evident puns; the vast majority are used with dramatic effect. The subjective tendency of Hamlet’s own mind is marked by his making three-fourths of the total number, and many of these are used ironically with great force. The puns of the grave-digger are suited to his low comedy character, and to this level Hamlet approximates in the churchyard scene. The jests of Polonius are weak and ineffective, as of a man whose thoughts are superficial. I may here draw attention to the fact that in this play of *Hamlet*, regarded by all as most typical of Shakespeare’s

genius, the percentage of puns is almost exactly the same as the average percentage for all the plays.

The pun, the despised of the Commentators, may seem but a small thing ; even humour, it is well known, forms the dullest subject for an essay ; how wearisome, then, must be a paper on puns ! Had it been possible to discuss the varied subjects of puns, to put forward the fresh explanations of difficult passages that must needs occur to anyone making such a special study as this, to work out in more detail the numerous side issues at which we have here only been able to glance, then indeed I venture to think that few would have brought against me the charge of dulness. And should anyone be hereby incited to take up this study, he will not find it so dry as its bare bones appear in this paper. For the puns themselves he will acquire a cultivated taste ; many a passage that was before dark, and may-be meaningless, will have for him meaning and beauty when light is thrown on it by this research. He will become skilful as a French detective in ferreting out puns and tracking them to their origin : he will learn how the pronunciation of our English tongue has altered in these last three centuries, though the Cockneys and the Irish both retain some of the old sounds : he will become acquainted with many a curious custom and the slang terms derived from it : he may even gain boldness to proceed to conjectural emendation of the text ; for a pun in one place is often so closely simulated in another that the change of a letter would elucidate the sentence and make it, as the Commentators say, "much more in our author's manner." Finally, he will gain an increased reverence for the man who had such command over a newly-framed language that he could perpetrate in it the large number of ten hundred and sixty-two—puns !

F. A. BATHER.

APPENDIX.

A FEW words more as to the Table on p. 74. The chronological order followed is that of Fleay: it is better to adopt some certain order to avoid the charge of prejudice, and that of Fleay seems well-considered. By ranging the figures of time and pun order in parallel columns, the comparison is made at a glance. Confining attention to the twenty-five undoubtedly genuine plays, we see that five figures coincide, seven are but one place out, three are two places out, while only four are far removed. Of the twelve plays the authorship of which is in whole or part doubtful, as many as six are in very different positions in the two orders. Some may take this as an additional argument against their Shakespearian origin. Of course one ought to separate out from the plays of mixed authorship the portions ascribed to Sh., and confine the analysis to them. This would have led me too far into the desert of controversy; and I prefer to point out these simple facts, which are undoubtedly suggestive. W. Hazlitt somewhere says that Sh. was too fond of punning for so great a man; but I regard it as a very sign of his greatness that he was not afraid of this two-edged weapon, and that he wielded it with such vigour. Relying on perceptions, without analysis, I should say that other Elizabethan dramatists did not make nearly so much use of the pun as did Sh. It is very likely that I have not yet reckoned all Sh.'s puns: while this paper was printing I found twenty more, now added to the table; but, since the order already drawn up was not thereby affected, it is safe to predict that no fresh discoveries will greatly alter it.

The following notes on individual puns will illustrate the essay, and may throw fresh light on some of the passages themselves:—

- (1) *Com. Err.*, IV, iv, 44, *Dro. E.*—"Mistress '*respice finem*' respect your end, or rather the prophecy like the parrot, beware the rope's end." Example of a pun here only implied, but easily apprehended by those acquainted with Buchanan's pamphlet against Ld. Liddington, which ends with, "*Respice finem, respice funem.*" That this jest was known on the stage is proved by Dekker's *Satiro-Mastix*, pub. 1602, "But come *respice funem.*" Wags taught their parrots to allude to a rope or hanging, as the

probable end of those who addressed them : hence, *apud* "Sh. Key," arose the term 'ropery.' Cf. 1 *Henry VI*, I, iii, 53, "Winchester goose, I cry, a rope ! a rope !"

- (2) *Jul. Cæs.*, I, ii, 122, *Cassius*.—"His coward lips did from their colour fly." "A plain man would have said, 'the colour fled from his lips.' . . . But the false expression was for the sake of as false a piece of wit : a poor quibble alluding to a coward flying from his colours." So Warburton, who fails entirely to see the force gained by this mode of expression, and its propriety in this passage.
- (3) *A. Y. L.*, V, i, 49, *Touch*.—" . . . *ipse* is he : now you are not *ipse*, for I am he." *The Wykehamist* (November, '82, p. 107) censures a reader in the Shakespeare Society for making a slip over the pun "not tipsy." This pun carries on the comparison of Audrey to drink poured from one glass to another : William is now without the intoxication of Audrey's love.
- (4) *A. Y. L.*, III, ii, 36, *Touch*.—"Then art thou damned. *Cor*.—"Nay, I hope." *Touch*.—"Truly, thou art damned like an ill-roasted egg all on one side." A. J. Ellis says that the second "damned" = 'dammed,' *i.e.*, wedged.
- (5) *Richard II*, V, v, 67, *Groom*.—"Hail, royal prince." *Rich*.—"Thanks, noble peer ; The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear." A Royal (10s.) is ten groats more than a Noble (6s. 8d.) Richard probably means himself by "the cheapest" ; were he ten groats less dear to his enemies, *i.e.*, a mere noble, he would not be in prison.
- (6) 2 *Henry VI*, IV, viii, 24, *Cade*.—"Hath my sword therefore broke through London gates, that you should leave me at the White Hart in Southwark ?" Wordsworth has a note : "Play on words (heart). 'Desert me like cowards' : see *Henry V*, III, i, 64." Very ingenious ! but I have not reckoned this as a pun for these reasons :—(a) In Hall's *Chronicle*, on which this play is based, we read : "The captain [*i.e.*, Cade], being advertised of the king's absence, came first into Southwark, and there lodged at the *White Hart*. . . ." The words are therefore natural for Cade to use ; to suppose a pun is unnecessary. (b) The reference to *Henry V* is to the word "white-livered" ; as also *Mer. Ven.*, III, ii, and *Rich. III*, IV, iv : this is no argument. A better parallel is *Macb.* II, ii, 64, "My hands are of your colour, but I shame to wear a heart so white" ; here there are special reasons for the epithet : as a phrase it is not elsewhere used by Sh. : why should we suppose it implied here ? Wordsworth doubtless relied on the frequency of the pun 'heart' and 'hart' ; and if there be any truth in his suggestion, this is a grand example of a highly-developed double meaning (see p. 82).

- (7) *Meas. for Meas.*, I, ii, 94, *Clown*.—"A woman with maid by him." Ellis says this alludes to the word 'withmade' = unmade, ruined : but I know of no such use of the words. Still the Clown's remark is rather pointless without some implied jest.

Farmer said : "When we meet with a harsh expression in Sh. we are usually to look for a play upon words." The following passages are believed to contain puns, hitherto unnoticed, which explain, or at least add force to, the meaning :—

- (8) *Hamlet*, III, iv, 210, *Ham*.—"When in one line two crafts directly meet." If, as Miles supposes, Hamlet had planned that the 'pirate' ship should rescue him, he may be here alluding to it in the two meanings of 'craft.'
- (9) *Lear*, III, vi, 28, "leak." Cf. *Tempest*, I, i, 50. B. and F., *The Chances*, I, iii, 42. *Ibid.*, I, vi, 4.
- (10) *Troil. Cress.*, III, ii, 58, *Pand.*—"Words pay no debts, give her deeds ; but she'll bereave you of the deeds too, if she call your activity in question. What, billing again !" Pandarus uses much legal phraseology in this scene, and it is not hard to find similar allusions in "deeds" and "billing."
- (11) *M. Ado*, I, iii, 70, *D. John*.—"If I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way." Probably a pun ; "cross" = to thwart, but 'to cross oneself' is the same as 'to bless oneself.'
- (12) *A. Y. L.*, I, iii, 20, *Cel.*—"Come, wrestle with thy affections." *Ros.*—"O, they take the part of a better wrestler than myself."

There is a double equivocal in this ; we may paraphrase thus :—*Cel.*—"Wrestle with that which affects you, and makes you melancholy." *Ros.*—"He whom I affect requires a better wrestler than I am to overcome him, for he has beaten the Duke's wrestler," and again "My affection sides with a better wrestler than I am : I love Orlando." That Celia perceives the jest is shown by her next remark.

The following begets a horrible suspicion :—

- (13) *Hamlet*, III, ii, 227, "The Mouse-trap : Marry how ? Tropically : " Ff. ; but Q1 reads "Trapically." If Q1 was obtained by reporting, or from the actors, it may be that the actor of Hamlet introduced this ἀπαξ λεγόμενον for the sake of a pun. Does this show that not all the puns are due to Sh. ? A similar misspelling for the jest's sake occurs in 2 *Henry VI*, IV, ii, 170, *Dick*.—" . . . for selling the duke-dom of *Maine*." *Cade*.—" . . . thereby is England *mained*." = 'maimed,' but is unknown to me elsewhere. Cf. also *Mer. Ven.*, II, ii, 131, "specify" for 'specify,' and 141, "frutify" for 'fructify.'

I had collected a large number of puns throwing light on the former Pronunciation of English: it was not till my researches were all but completed that I was able to refer to the splendid work of Mr. A. J. Ellis on "Early English Pronunciation" published by the Chaucer Society. I was glad to find the work already accomplished in his pages, and thither all should turn who wish for complete information on this subject; I can add but little fresh. Students should bear in mind that for a pun to be quite passable, the sound in the two words need not be exactly the same: comic effects are often obtained by forcing the pronunciation; when dramatists did not scruple to alter spelling, actors must have been quite ready to slur sounds. (See Note 14, preceding section). Ellis is too ready to assume complete similarity of sound: on the other hand, he points out that in many places the pun would not be noticed unless the sounds were distinct. Some of my notes are here printed as exemplifying, adding to, or (unfortunately) differing from the remarks of Ellis.

- (1) *M. Ado*, II, iii, 56, sqq., show that 'nothing' was pronounced 'noting.' So in *Rich. II*, II, ii, 12, *Queen*.—"Some unborn sorrow . . . Is coming towards me; and my inward soul With nothing trembles: at something it grieves . . ." Wordsworth reads "noting" instead of "nothing," an alteration only excused by the change of pronunciation, which has destroyed for us the double meaning. In the same play, IV, i, 201, instead of "I must nothing be; therefore no, no," Wordsworth reads, "I must no thing be; therefore no king." This conjecture seems the more probable when we remember how close a similarity exists between 'noting' and 'no king,' while this very fact makes the separation of "no-thing" unnecessary, and unlikely to be correct. Other examples of the mute *h* in *th* are:—*A. Y. L.*, III, iii, 6, *Touch*.—"I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the *Goths*." In *L. L. L.*, IV, iii, 161, "mote" is printed "moth" in the original editions. *L. L. L.*, I, ii, 91, "Samson," says Armado, "had small reason to have a love of a green colour. He surely affected her for her wit." *Moth*.—"It was so, sir; for she had a green wit." R. G. White would read "green with"; see *Judges* xvi, 6, 7, 8, "seven green withs which had not been dried."
- (2) *A. Y. L.*, II, vii, 52, *Jagues*.—The *why* is plain as *way* to parish church." This pronunciation of 'way' is still affected by cockneys.
- (3) *Wint. Tale*, II, iii, 90, *Leont*.—"A callat of boundless tongue, who late hath *beat* her husband and now *bait*s me." Diphthong

ea was pronounced *a* (see pp. 81, 84), but, as Ellis says, the sarcasm would have been lost if the two words sounded alike; therefore *ai* must have had more of an *i* sound: cf. (2).

- (4) *A. Y. L.*, III, iii, 3, *Touch*.—" . . . doth my simple feature content you?" *Audrey*.—"Your features! Lord warrant us! what features?" Why this thushness on Audrey's part? The soft and hard sounds of the consonants followed by *u* were in a state of flux (quote = cote, qualm = calm, suitor = shooter, etc.) Hence we must pronounce "features" as "faitours," meaning 'ill-doers': this explains Audrey's ejaculation. Cf. *Rich. III.*, I, i, 19, "Cheated of feature by dissembling nature."
- (5) *Two Gents.*, II, i, 2, *Val*.—"My gloves are *on*. *Speed*.—"This is but *one*." *L. L. L.*, IV, ii, 85, "pers-on" (p. 80). "One" pronounced 'on' or like 'own,' the initial *w* sound omitted, as rustics say 'onst' for 'once.' Cf. *John*, III, iii, 39, "Sound on into the drowsy race of night," there is very little difference between this and "one unto," which Collier and Knight read.
- (6) *Mer. Ven.*, IV, i, 123, *Grat*.—"Not on thy *sole* but on thy *soul*," etc. "Soul" probably pronounced 'sowl'; this would obviate the difficulty of distinguishing the words: but cf. *Rom. Jul.*, I, iv, 14, and *Jul. Cæs.*, I, i, 13, where F. has "soules" for "soles." Possibly "sole" was pronounced 'sool'; see next note.
- (7) The following passages prove that the long *ō* (*ω*) had the sound of *oo* in 'food':—*Jul. Cæs.*, I, ii, 156, "Now is it Rome indeed and room enough." *Ibid.*, III, i, 289, "No Rome [*sc.* room] of safety for Octavius yet." *John*, III, i, 180, "That I have room with Rome to curse awhile." "Rome" rhymes with "doom" in *Lucrece*, 715 and 1851, and with "groom," *Ibid.*, 1644. Cf. Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece*, 1638, ". . . you shall have my room, my Rome indeed." In 1 *Henry VI*, III, i, 51, "Rome" is by some thought to have its modern pronunciation: *Win*.—"Rome shall remedy this." *War*.—"Roam thither then"; and this is adduced as an argument against the Shakespearian authorship of the play. But cf. *Rom. Jul.*, II, iv, 89, ". . . 'broad' added to 'goose,' proves thee far and wide a broad goose," *i.e.*, 'brood-goose,' anciently spelled 'brode'; 'broad' then had the same sound as 'brode,' indeed Ben Jonson wished to spell it so; but 'brode' = 'brood' and was doubtless so pronounced; therefore 'broad' was pronounced 'brood'; that is, *oa* had the sound *oo* in at least one instance. Therefore 'roam' may have been pronounced 'room'; and in 1 *Henry VI*, III, i, 51, "Rome" may have been sounded "room": therefore the passage is no argument against the Shakespearian authorship of the play. Other Shakespearian instances of this sound of long *ō* are: *Mer*.

Ven., III, v, 54, "Much that the Moor should be more than reason"; 2 *Henry VI*, IV, i, 70, *Suf.*—Pole! *Cap.*—Pool! (family names are conservative, and this pronunciation still obtains); *Rom. Jul.*, III, iv, 8, "These times of woe afford no time to woo."

This sound of long *ō* prevailed till the present century, as the following anecdote shows: There used to be near Bognor a house, in which the Princess Charlotte had lived, called 'the Dome House' because it had a dome on it: this house would never let. "No wonder," said the old folk, "for it is a *doomed* house!" I have this on the authority of my uncle, Arthur Blomfield, Esq. To him and other helpful friends I here render my best thanks.

F. A. B.

SHAKESPEARE AND GOETHE.

SHAKESPEARE AND GOETHE.

THE triumph dearest to the heart of a poet, could he choose his own triumph, would perhaps be a continued and increasing mastery over the minds of his countrymen. "Here," we can fancy him saying, "where I first drew the vital air, first read in the book of nature and was quickened by youth into song ; here be it mine still to survive in the spiritual sense, still to kindle hearts as mine once was kindled, and through no alien language to speak to my own people words that, like the soul from which they were born, cannot grow old." All other triumph, we can well imagine, might seem shadowy and unreal compared with this ; natural human instinct hardly conceives of fame as obtainable by singing the Lord's song in a strange land.

Yet, on the other hand, the highest fame never comes by observation, nor exactly as he who wins it might have desired it. The immortal names in poetry are for the most part those of men who could hardly have conceived of universal or cosmopolitan renown. An Ionian festival would have sufficed to Homer ; an Athenian or Sicilian audience to Æschylus ; Dante turned, albeit not without a touch of self-reproach, from the "universal language," Latin, to his own—to the tongue "of the fair land where men say *Sì*." At Shakespeare's personal mood we can but guess ; may

we not fancy him, if urged to aim at European fame, or to adapt his genius to French, or Spanish, or German likings, saying, with the fine scorn that underlies serenity :—

“ Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy
Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.”

And what they would not have sought by any sacrifice of their true selves, they have found through that very independence of soul, that self-imposed limitation, in abundant measure. More than seven cities contend for Homer now ; Æschylus' present audience could no more sit round the Dionysiac theatre than Dante's could crowd into his “bel San·Giovanni” ; and of Shakspeare it has been said, not without truth, by the greatest and most generous of his successors : “ Shakspeare ist von den Deutschen mehr als von allen anderen Nationen, ja vielleicht mehr als von seiner eigener erkannt. Wir haben ihm alle Gerechtigkeit, Willigkeit und Schonung die wir uns unter einander selbst versagen, reichlich zugewendet.” “ More by the Germans than by the rest of the world—more, it may be, than by his own countrymen—has Shakspeare been acknowledged. To him have we devoted, in ample measure, that equity of judgment, that fairness and forbearance, that we refuse to one another.” (Goethe : *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Part III, Book xi.) This, it must be remembered, is a reminiscence of gratitude to Wieland and Eschenburg, not a personal boast, as will presently appear.

It is easy to overrate or to underrate, very hard to weigh with precision, the importance of a poet's victory over the intellect of a foreign nation. Sometimes it has foreshadowed the verdict of posterity ; sometimes it has remained an apparently inexplicable caprice. To take instances of the most familiar kind, there is no doubt that foreign opinion has nearly continued, in Byron's case, the

vogue which was once his lot in England ; *per contra*, the growing fame of Shelley and Wordsworth in England has roused but little corresponding admiration on the Continent. Various reasons may be given for this ; we shall not, probably, find them, even if taken collectively, adequate explanations of the mystery ; we shall fall back upon saying that while the lesser fames brighten and darken by no very traceable law, the greater fames are eclipsed only to redouble their lustre. It was possible for Lamartine to see nothing in Dante and his work but "*un grand homme et un mauvais livre*"; possible for Byron to put Pope beside, if not above, Shakespeare ; possible for Coleridge to doubt if it "became his moral character" to render *Faust* into English ; but, after all, there results from this no diminution of the fame of Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe, but only the (not useless) lesson that very great men may now and then fail to see with accurate vision the lineaments of men greater still.

But the effect of Shakespeare upon the mind of Europe would be a subject to fill a library ; his effect upon the mind of Germany only would need the writing of several, the reading of countless, volumes ; a very subordinate task is here attempted, that of sketching in outline the history of his influence upon one mind—a mind differing from that of Shakespeare in a thousand ways, but so akin to it in one large quality that their names may fairly be ranked together—the quality of imaginative interest, unceasing, unceasing, in all the manifold scenes and conditions of the life of man. No thing, no man, is too high or too low for Shakespeare or for Goethe to smile or weep over. If the former "unlocked his heart" once for all in the mystical sonnets, or gave us a "walking shadow" of his inward self in Hamlet, while outwardly he was putting his whole soul into a jest at The Mermaid, the latter, in like

manner, gave us a Faust that was, and yet was not, himself, a Wilhelm that had all his weaknesses, half of his quick recipient sympathies, but nothing of his strength of purpose or serenity, while outwardly he was the gayest of the gay at Weimar, or living his golden year, a student among artists, at Rome. If to the former it was given to witness and to feel his country's most memorable epoch of intellectual and political expansion, and to see (why did he not commemorate?) the shattered fleet of Spain borne away by the wind to its doom amid the billows and on the rocks, while the latter only saw his country crushed and devastated by Napoleon, and, when that tyranny was over-past, only

“Looked on Europe's dying hour
Of fitful dream and feverish power,”—

yet let us remember his vast counterpoising advantage ; as poet, as playwright, he had Shakespeare to guide him.

There is this, too, of especial interest in the relation of these two minds, that the dominion of the earlier over the later poet was not always unquestioned. In Goethe's Strasburg period, the days of *Sturm und Drang*, when, with Lenz as his hierophant, he loved the mysteries of Shakespeare not wisely, nor too well, but with a devotion too noisy to be quite unaffected, it is evident that the main attraction of the young enthusiasts was Shakespeare's magnificent variety, his unfettered and apparently lavish profusion of imaginative wealth ; his emancipation from the rules under which—so they thought—French taste had formalised the literature of France and was strangling at its birth the literature of Germany. But all extravagance, even that of generous enthusiasm, pays a penalty : in this case the penalty was that, with the ebb of the tide of youth, there ebbed away, for a time, from Goethe, not only his fervour, but something also of the real effect of Shakespeare upon

him. He regained it ; yet one feels that in the interval he developed a temper that is the very antithesis to Shakespeare's—a disposition to watch his own self-development, a "sickly pottering," as Mr. Hutton well calls it, about the "pyramid of his own existence." He missed the finest quality of Shakespeare—that of losing himself utterly in great and ennobling creations : he missed too that quality—so easy to recognise, so hard to define—that makes Shakespeare, the least didactic of poets, the most elevating and fortifying of influences. Goethe possessed, like Shakespeare, that impartial interest in hero and fop, saint and villain, sage and fool, that is essential to the highest dramatic success ; both alike draw human beings, not abstractions ; both perhaps might have said, as Mr. Lewes thinks, that, in drama, *qui vitia odit, homines odit*. But, when the lists are fairly set, there is, in Shakespeare, an innate nobility of tone, about virtue and vice, to which Goethe never attained. He can be grand, generous, high-minded, sympathetic ; but he has not that inward shudder at the infinite character of wrong-doing which Shakespeare has always, though deep-hidden in reserve. Goethe "never heard of any crime which he might not have committed" : there speaks the equable, serene, artistic spirit that can move divinely, like Artemis, in heaven and on earth and in hell. Contrast with this such a wailing cry *de profundis* as Shakespeare's :—

"The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action.
A bliss in proof, and, proved, a very woe ;
Before, a joy proposed : behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows ; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell."

If words ever came from the heart and conscience, these did so ; and it is just because this shudder of repentance is in the highest sense *natural*, a part of the phenomena of

good and evil which compose the drama of life, that Shakespeare's drama is more powerfully natural than Goethe's. Shakespeare *has* the feeling : Goethe can sketch it sympathetically, as he can the "Confessions of a Beautiful Soul" in *Wilhelm Meister*, Book vi ; but he does not know it in the inward sense.

It must, however, be remembered that Goethe, far from deeming himself Shakespeare's rival, in this or any other matter, speaks of him with an unhesitating veneration. From the days of *Sturm und Drang* at Strasburg, when (in the curious "Oration on Shakespeare" preserved for us by Otto Jahn and Mr. Lewes) he cries : "The first page of Shakespeare that I read made me his for life ; and when I had finished a single play, I stood like one born blind, on whom a miraculous hand bestows sight in a moment,"—through the period in which he wrote *Wilhelm Meister*, and pronounced through the mouth of his hero : "Ich erinnere mich nicht, dass ein Buch, ein Mensch oder irgend eine Begebenheit des Lebens so grosse Wirkungen auf mich hervorgebracht hätte, als die kostlichen Stücke. . . . Sie scheinen ein Werk eines himmlischen Genius zu seyn, der sich den Menschen nähert, um sie mit sich selbst auf die gelindeste Weise bekannt zu machen,"—down to the last days, when, in conversing with Eckermann, he produced some English illustrations of Shakespeare, saying, "It is even *terrifying* to look through this book. It makes me feel the infinite wealth and grandeur of Shakespeare. *There is nothing in human life to which he has not given form and voice* ; and all with what ease and freedom ! But it is in vain to talk about Shakespeare ; we can never say anything adequate,"—from the dawn of his life to its lingering sunset, he bears the same heartfelt witness. Nor must we forget the curious piece of silent homage paid by him to the author of *Julius Cæsar*. He read it, and, in

youthful audacity, projected a rival drama on the same subject; but admiration conquered audacity, and warned him against attempting to "gild refined gold." Years afterwards, in 1808, he was urged by Napoleon himself to take up the subject and make it his own. Not without a touch of vain glory, the great conqueror sketched the drama for him: "Dans cette tragédie il faudrait montrer au monde comment César aurait pu faire le bonheur de l'humanité si on lui avait laissé le temps d'exécuter ses vastes plans." It must have been a tempting suggestion, to one of Goethe's courtly instincts. But he put it by, remembering, doubtless, that there was a greater king of the drama than Napoleon.

Goethe is commonly accused of admiring overmuch his own faculties, his own development; of having been uniformly and serenely conscious of greatness; his singular lack of literary jealousy, his free, though discriminating, commendation of his predecessors and contemporaries, have been frequently taken *in peiorem partem*, as signs of self-assurance, of conviction of his own superiority to them all. Is his praise of Shakespeare, it may be asked, of such a kind? Is it the graceful arrogance of condescension, or the reasoned conclusion of genius and unresting study, that pronounces thus to Eckermann: "Shakespeare was not a theatre poet; the stage was too narrow for his great intellect; *truly the whole visible world was too narrow*"? None but those ignorant of Goethe can really ask this question with any doubt of the answer. The praise is as genuine and heartfelt as it is deserved. Goethe knew, if ever man knew, the sources of his own culture, the influences that had first roused his genius and then fed and fostered it, and kept it young in all but experience through the labours of seventy years; and this is his estimate, in his seventy-fifth year, of his debt and duty to

Shakespeare ; it is accentuated by the context, which exhibits Goethe as fully conscious of his own claims, against those of lesser men. "Tieck is a man of great talents, and nobody can be more sensible than myself of his really extraordinary merit ; only when they tried to raise him above his proper place, and speak of him as my equal, they made a great mistake. I do not hesitate to speak of myself as I am ; I did not make myself what I am. *But I might, with as much propriety, compare myself with Shakespeare, who also is, as he was made, a being of a higher order than myself, to whom I must look up and pay due reverence.*"¹ Such was the final attitude towards Shakespeare of the author of *Faust*, the one play which might compete with *Hamlet* in its effect upon the mind of Europe ; of him who, in Emerson's judgment, "flung into literature, in his Mephistopheles, the first organic figure that has been added for some ages, and which will remain as long as the *Prometheus*" ; of him who gave to us in Mignon the embodied image of *Sehnsucht*, a form worthy of Shakespeare's own hand, and showed in gentler pathos what Dante showed in the sternest bitterness, the *dura fugae mala*. Could one find the tomb of Mignon, one would like to write upon it the record of one of Shakespeare's most deep-drawn sighs :

"The sly slow hours shall not determinate
The dateless limit of thy dear exile."

Over this mind, we repeat, and through the medium of a language, early acquired, it is true, but known mainly through its literature, did Shakespeare exercise the influence and weave the spell we have tried to describe in outline. The effect is general, not particular—that is to say, the greater works of Goethe bear little or no

¹ Goethe to Eckermann, March 30, 1824.

evidence of having been directly *modelled* upon Shakespeare; he was too good an artist to forget that imitation is but a second-rate homage compared to a prolonged and exhaustive study of the tone of thought, a steady gaze upon that *σφαῖρα ψυχῆς ἀγγοειδής*, that luminous sphere of imagination, which shone around Shakespeare, and never more brightly and serenely than in the last years before his life was rounded with a sleep.

Even an outline of the relation of these two memorable minds would be incomplete were we to forget how deeply Goethe concerned himself with that *criticism* of Shakespeare with which, in more recent days, his countrymen have so largely, and sometimes so bewilderingly, occupied themselves. It is scarcely worth while to record the blunder, curiously popular for the time, committed by Goethe in recasting *Romeo and Juliet* for the Weimar stage. This was one of those "fears of the brave and follies of the wise" which may be left to the tender mercies of Mr. Lewes (*Life of Goethe*, Book VI, ch. v) with this reflection, that probably Goethe understood the somewhat factitious and immature taste of his Weimar audience, and dealt with *Romeo and Juliet* rather in his capacity of stage-director than as a dramatist. The letter, quoted by Mr. Lewes, in which he defends his treatment of the play, seems to us distinctly written from the manager's point of view. Far more interesting is it to realise his actual opinions on the master-pieces of Shakespeare from the pages of *Wilhelm Meister* and elsewhere. Eckermann records for us a judgment of his, with which it is hard to agree wholly: "*Macbeth* is Shakespeare's best acting play, the one in which he shows most understanding of stage effect. *But would you see his intellect unfettered, read Troilus and Cressida, and see how he uses the materials of the Iliad in his own fashion.*" Now the burlesqueing of

Homer is certainly not the most admirable thing in *Troilus and Cressida* itself, far less is it one of Shakespeare's best efforts. More solid and more valuable by far is the celebrated study of *Hamlet* in *Wilhelm Meister*. It is, however, extremely hard to approach this piece of criticism from the correct point of view. It is mainly placed in the mouth of Wilhelm himself; and Wilhelm, though he be, in the main, Goethe's counterpart, is yet the counterpart of Goethe's weaker self, dramatically conceived; he sees with the eye of true imagination when he contemplates Hamlet himself; the veil of half-sensual sentimentality obstructs his vision when he contemplates Ophelia. An instance or two will show what we mean. Here is the sketch of Hamlet *before* the strait of action came upon him: "Wenn in seiner zarten Seele der Hass aufkeimen konnte, so war es nur eben so viel, als nöthig ist, um bewegliche und falsche Höflinge zu verachten und spottisch mit ihnen zu spielen. Ein akademischer Hinschlendern schien er auch bei Hofe fortzusetzen. Er besass mehr Fröhlichkeit der Laune als des Herzens, war ein guter Gesellschafter, nachgiebig, bescheiden, besorgt, und konnte eine Beleidigung vergeben und vergessen; aber niemals konnte er sich mit dem vereinigen, der die Gränzen des Rechten, des Guten, des Anstandigen überschritt." "If in his gentle soul hatred could develop itself at all, it was only in such measure as to enable him to despise in a fitting manner the changeable and insincere Court butterflies, and to sport with them in a mocking spirit. He seemed to continue at a Court the sauntering University mode of life. Such merriment as he possessed was of humour rather than of heart; he was companionable, facile, discreet, courteous, and could forgive and forget an injury, while he could at no time associate with anyone who transgressed the limits of the right, the honourable, and the becoming."

No wonder, we think, that Wilhelm's little company applauded the preliminary sketch : what follows is even better. Describing Hamlet's attitude on receiving the Ghost's command, he proceeds to unravel his character in words that have become so familiar that we almost forget to whom we owe them. "It is clear to me that Shakespeare had in mind to show us a great action laid upon a soul too weak to achieve it. . . . An oak is planted in a precious vase, in whose bosom nought but lovely flowers should be borne ; the roots expand, the vase is shattered. A fair and pure and honourable and most virtuous nature, not endowed with a hero's strength of nerve, sinks under a burden too heavy to be borne, too imperative to be avoided. All duties are sacred to him, *this* duty is too hard. The impossible is laid upon him—the impossible, not in itself, but in relation to him ; he winds and turns, frets and advances and falls back ; he is ever being reminded by others, ever reminding himself ; he does eventually all but lose hold of his resolve ; yet even so never for a moment regains the gladness of his soul."

None but his creator could "pluck out the heart" of Hamlet's mystery ; but, of lesser men, Goethe, we think, has seen the character most steadily, most skilfully interpreted it. Alas, that in the very next chapter, the peculiar weakness of Wilhelm should be exercised on the theme of Ophelia. That a man of first-rate genius wrote this sentence of her, may well rouse our marvel :—"Ihre stille Bescheidenheit athmet eine liebevolle Begierde, und sollte die bequeme Göttin Gelegenheit das Bäumchen schütteln, so würde die Frucht sogleich herabfallen." As if this were not sufficiently astray from the character of Ophelia, "the pure among women, whose name is as blessing to speak," he must needs find, in the tone of her delirium, some reminiscence of licentious imaginations in her happier days.

Shakespeare knew, however he acquired the knowledge, the phenomena of insanity as few have known them : the saddest of those phenomena he would not spare us, even in Ophelia's case : he would have us see, in her own words, soon so piteously true of herself,—

“that noble and most sovereign reason
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh,
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy.”

But, if anything may be safely predicated of Shakespeare's mind, he did *not* mean us to see, as Goethe does, in the loose ravings of Ophelia, the hitherto silent thoughts of her secret soul.

So fails, at one point or another—moral, intellectual, practical—the very greatest mind that aspires to see one of Shakespeare's characters as Shakespeare saw it. Let it be remembered that the great mind of Goethe fully felt, and frankly allowed, its failure. We have seen in what terms of passionate gratitude this greatest intellect of Germany spoke of Shakespeare. Let us do, to one and the other of them, the simple justice of recognising, in their relation, the most striking and cogent proof that genius transcends all barriers, of race or place, and abhors all jealousy.

E. D. A. MORSHEAD.

SHAKSPERE AS A HISTORIAN.

SHAKSPERE AS A HISTORIAN.

AMIDST the numerous and perplexing problems which torment this generation, there is one which has proved of considerable interest, both from its intrinsic importance and from the character of the arguments which its discussion has disclosed. The controversy which has called into the arena combatants of eminent position presents itself in a variety of forms, but stated in its plainest terms it stands thus. Is it the first essential of a historian to chronicle facts with a most rigid accuracy, to present them with the most judicious proportion and most luminous arrangement; or, on the other hand, is it his primary duty to leave on the mind a striking picture of the life and times—a picture with some of the shadows exaggerated and some of the colours brightened, in order that the general effect may be the more vivid and attractive? Is the historian to be an “artisan” or an “artist”? We are told that the only historical artists in England of modern times have been Gibbon and Carlyle: the rest are “horny-handed sons of toil” on the one hand, or on the other, artists of an order too inferior to take rank as such. That this is a real and not an imaginary distinction is proved by the divergence in the ideals which writers of history to-day set before themselves. Some by the most careful examination of details and documents, and the most rigid attention to

authorities and charters, pique themselves on their propinquity to actual fact. Others cast at these the imputation of being merely "Dryasdusts," and, with a splendid scorn of small details, aim at a result in which will be presented the striking outlines of an epoch, the greatness of the character of a hero, the struggles and the victories of a nation. The instances, which will readily occur, of such vivid portraiture, are Froude's study of Henry VIII, Kingsley's description of the reign of Elizabeth, Macaulay's delineation of William III, and Carlyle's life of Oliver Cromwell. But the mention of these concrete instances immediately will evoke the suggestion that in some, if not all of them, the problem is practically solved, the contending elements are reconciled, and with a rigid adherence to facts has been blended the colouring of large imaginative genius. Such is the line of defence: and it is precisely on this ground that the defenders of Carlyle place him in the front rank; he presents, they contend, just that combination of accuracy in detail and of imaginative genius which are the two factors that, duly composed, constitute the ideal historian. It is not to the purpose here to enter into a particular controversy: it is enough to recognise that even with regard to Carlyle the doubt has arisen in many minds whether the fine historical imagination has not in some cases led him to dispose facts in an arrangement which is misleading, to neglect others which are inharmonious with his design, and to heighten the colouring in order to produce a more startling effect. Thus the primary controversy invariably passes from the abstract to the concrete, and those who are engaged in it, while they grant that a due proportion must be observed between these two factors, inevitably join issue as to particular historians.

Enough has been said to draw attention to a real and important distinction in the character of modern historical

work : the same problem has been raised with regard to Livy, with regard to Thucydides, with regard to Tacitus ; these in turn have been accused of sacrificing matter to form, of neglecting or distorting facts in order that the picture which they present may not be embarrassed by incongruous details. Thus modern criticism has presented a Hannibal, a Cleon, or a Tiberius, in quite a different light ; and thus it is inevitable that in various historians, and under changing guises, the controversy awakes, as soon as ever a theory of historical method is tested by actual instances, and it can never be laid to rest so long as the disputants confine the area of discussion to the domain of history. But as soon as ever the kindred province of the dramatist is entered the antagonists gradually grow calmer, the strife lulls, and the difficulties vanish. In that enchanted ground the atmosphere has altered ; the chains of actual fact no longer cling round the soaring imagination, and the poet walks free from the restraints which must ever fetter the historian.

In what important point, then, does the province of the historian differ from that of the dramatist ? It has been well said by Lord Macaulay that "Shakspeare is guided by a model which exists in his imagination ; Tacitus by a model furnished from without." The dramatist is required to bring his characters into harmony with human nature, while the historian is limited to the sphere of actual fact. But the precise point at which the two approach most closely is when the dramatist takes some portion of history as the background of the piece. The tendency of modern criticism is to demand that in such a case he should adhere rigidly to all details of manners and customs, as well as to all the lines of character and conduct, which the history of the epoch determines. Such a spirit is the result of that Alexandrine influence which watched over the declining

years of Greek literature ; accuracy of detail, rigid adherence to actual fact, may be the scaffolding by which the building of history may, and indeed must be, erected, but as soon as they become the test and canon by which dramatic work is measured, poetry is strangled at the moment of its birth, the dramatist is in danger of sinking to the level of a prosaic annalist. No one wishes to disparage the merits of a veracious chronicler, nor to under-rate the services of a truthful antiquarian ; they have their work, but it is not the work of the dramatist, and it is for this reason that Shakspeare teaches, by his attitude to history, so fruitful a lesson to all who study him. It is not necessary to point out that he is master of every mood of men and women ; that no passion or pathos is foreign to him ; that it is just because he is true to human nature that he lays all who hear him under a spell ; but, on the other hand, it is in this connection important to observe how unscrupulous he is in the niceties of historic detail. To realise this fact once for all is to learn that the purpose of the dramatist is to teach general lessons of abiding interest, whether the medium through which he presents them be an entirely imaginary scene or one taken from history. It is, therefore, shallow criticism to convict Shakspeare of small lapses and tiny offences against historical fact by chronicling the cases in which he has transferred the customs of one age to another. When such expressions occur as "Cut my lace, Charmian," *Antony and Cleopatra*, I, iii, 71 ; "To billiards, Charmian," II, v, 3 ; "She has packed cards with Cæsar," IV, xiv, 19 ; "His cocks do win the battle," II, iii, 36 ; "Doublets that hangmen bury with those that wore them," *Coriolanus*, I, v, 7 ; "Then there's my glove," *Timon of Athens*, V, iv, 54 ; "Enter fool," II, ii, 47 ; when Shakspeare brings "Switzers" into *Hamlet*, or makes him play "at

the University," III, ii, 104 ; when in *Julius Cæsar* they "count the clock" ; what do these things prove except that Shakspeare was absolutely indifferent to such minute accuracy ? Or, again, allusions to Galen and Cato, and to Publius and Quintus, "That our best water brought by conduits hither," II, iii, 250, in *Coriolanus* ; the mention of Milo the athlete in *Troilus and Cressida* ; the conjunction of Dr. Caius and Falstaff ; the appearance of the scimitar with which the Prince of Morocco slew the Sophy of Persia ; or of a sign of Pegasus at Genoa instead of Cheapside ; the strange and fanciful combination in *Winter's Tale* of Libya, Sicilia, Bohemia, of the Emperor of Russia, Whitsun Pastorals, Christian burial, Puritan singing, the oracle of Delphos, Julio Romano (1492-1546)—these, again, are instances sufficient to make clear, once for all, that the poet takes no particular account of such details. The ideas and relations represented by such names or persons are needed by him ; he therefore uses these names and persons without any heed of the warnings of the antiquarian or the pedant. There seems nothing to be deduced from his attitude, except that the customs of Elizabeth and James I. can be inferred from his descriptions of the manners of Cleopatra and Coriolanus.

But what is the poet's relation to historical fact and sequence ? Does he ignore it ? Does he adhere to it ? The question is, of course, complicated by the further question as to the precise nature of Shakspeare's historical authorities, *e.g.*, Plutarch, Holinshed, and old plays. But leaving this question for the present, it is here proposed to examine in brief a few instances of deviations from history, and subsequently to extract from a review of the play of *King John* some conclusion as to Shakspeare's treatment of history in general.

In *Julius Cæsar* :—

"You know it is the feast of Lupercal," I, i, 72. The triumph really took place in Oct., 45, the feast of Lupercal being on Feb. 15, 44.

"Before the Capitol," III, i. Cæsar was really murdered in Pompey's curia ; cf. the same mistake, *Hamlet*, III, ii, 109.

"Octavius is already come to Rome," III, ii, 267. At the time of Cæsar's murder Octavius was at Apollonia.

"That day he overcame the Nervii," III, ii, 174. Antony did not join Cæsar till 54 B.C., three years after the reduction of the Nervii.

"Here or at the Capitol," IV, i, 11. The meeting really took place on an island near Bononia, on the Rhenus.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, III, ii, 24, Shakspeare makes the last meeting of Cæsar and Antony at Rome ; Plutarch places it at Tarentum.¹

III, xi. Shakspeare makes this scene at Alexandria ; Plutarch at Taenarus.

Or, again, in the English historical plays it is not difficult to find deviations from historical fact. Thus in *Richard II* :—

"The language I have learnt these forty years," I, iii, 159. The speaker could not have been more than thirty-three in 1398.

"On Wednesday next," IV, i, 319. The coronation took place on Monday, Oct. 13.

In *2 Henry IV* :—

"You, Cousin Nevil, as I may remember," III, i, 65. Warwick does not seem to have been present, and was not a Nevil, but a Beauchamp.

III, i, 103. Glendower did not die till after Henry IV.

Again, the representation of the Prince of Wales as wasting his time and substance with Falstaff is difficult to reconcile with the fact that he was fighting from his boyhood on the border, in Wales, and also in England ; his duel with Percy in *1 Henry IV*, v, 3, is at variance with the fact that Percy was killed by an arrow, while the disparity of twenty years in their ages gives way to a dramatic propriety requiring them to be alike young.

Such minute discrepancies are in some cases copied ; in others they are justified by the additional force given by

¹ Cf. Abbott's *Plutarch*.

this means to the lessons which the dramatist teaches. These instances will suffice to show the position in which Shakspeare is in this matter ; and a more particular examination of the play of *King John* will enable us to see how he distorts the facts as by a prism, in order that the single rays may be manifest and the particular purposes of the poet may be subserved.

Macaulay describes Herodotus' style as follows :—"A porter tells the story as if he had been hid behind the curtains of the royal bed at Windsor. So Lord Goderich says, 'I cannot manage this business ; I must go out.' So the king says, says he, 'Well, then, I must send for the Duke of Wellington—that's all.'" Thus it is the father of history represents the past as vividly before us ; but Shakspeare's representation of a past time as present is not so much by the graphic realization of the facts as by their idealization as containing abiding lessons and laws. Thus a series of divergences from history come into prominence in *King John*, in order that the events recorded may be made subservient to the principles they are taken to illustrate. The action of the play ranges over sixteen years (1199-1215) ; these years are compressed that the events should pass rapidly before the mind ; the two occasions of the war with France (springing out of the position of Philip as Arthur's guardian, and out of the deposition of John by Innocent III) are represented as closely consequent, when they were, as a matter of fact, separated by many years. Or, again, how has Shakspeare transmuted the historical characters ?

King John, who is described in history as "weak-headed, rotten-hearted, and bloody-handed," "a faithless son, a treacherous brother, an ungrateful master," is presented by Shakspeare with some of his blackness purged. His cringing, doubling nature comes out indeed in the interviews

with Hubert ; but his crimes, with the exception of the death of Arthur, are decently veiled, and he stands before us as a King, with considerable military ability and commanding influence, so that when Salisbury returns to his allegiance, he says :—

“We will, and calmly run on in obedience
Even to our ocean, to our great King John.”

King John is dressed like a king, even if his plumes are borrowed.

But if Shakspeare has tried to cover up the blackness of John, he has also presented Arthur in a light untrue to history, but eminently suitable to the purposes of the play. This pretty boy, whom Hubert cannot bear to touch, who takes a shipboy's semblance, whom his mother bewails in such tender accents :

“Grief fills the room up of my absent child,”

and around whom the sympathy of the hearers naturally centres, was seventeen years old when he died, and headed an expedition in 1202. Arthur's position is thus transfigured and his age kept in the background for poetic reasons, just as the life of Constance is prolonged for five years.¹

Again, Shakspeare, following the old play, unites Vidomar, Viscount of Limoges, near whose castle of Chaluz Richard I was wounded, with Leopold of Austria, who had shut Richard I up in Durrenstein, and calls the latter “Lymoges,” as the old play calls Lymoges “the Austrick Duke.” It was, doubtless with a view to poetic justice that Richard's bastard son Falconbridge kills this conglomerate personage near Angiers (III, ii, 3). “Austria's head lies there” ; after having tripped up his language

¹ Cf. Age of Richard II's second wife is increased ; Joan of Arc (in *Henry VI*) is made to take part in a peace concluded in 1435 ; Margaret of Anjou ought not to appear after 1471 in England.

repeatedly while he was alive. "Philip the bastard killed the Viscount of Limoges," says Holinshed, and Shakspeare has utilized the identification of these two men as an opportunity for paying off Richard's old scores against both.

Lastly, Pandulph, who comes in as "Cardinal of fair Milan and from Pope Innocent the legate here," was in 1215 nothing more than Master Pandulph, "our Lord Pope's subdeacon and familiar"; his ability in changing with Protean subtlety from a sophist to a politician, uniting the arguments learnt in the schools of Occam and Roscellinus with the statecraft of a Machiavelli is very noteworthy; his language seems a caricature of the so-called casuistry of the day with the ulterior object of throwing disgrace on the Roman system.

The character of Pandulph will suggest a point of view from which we may regard all the chief personages of the play. They are all in a sense historical characters; but it is no less true that they are representatives of classes or of institutions than to be found in England—they are, indeed, rather types than individuals. But by clothing his types in flesh and blood Shakspeare avoids the abstract and cold impersonality pervading the characters of Aristotle and Theophrastus, without sacrificing the general lessons which such delineation of character teaches. If Pandulph is not historical, he is typical of a system whose borders were wide enough to include theological logicians who speculated whether the feathers in an angel's wing were the same in the morning and the evening, and astute politicians who held the doctrine that—

"from land to land

The ancient thrones of Christendom are stuff
For occupation of a magic wand,
And 'tis the pope who wields it."

Falconbridge, again, as the typical Englishman, finds an

excellent foil in the boastful vanity of Austria ; dignified aristocracy is presented in Salisbury and Pembroke, just as popular loyalty to the crown is shown in Hubert.

All these elements are combined and fused in the play, the factors of society, the Crown, the Roman Catholic system, the barons, the people, are here embodied in representative types by the skill of the dramatist.

An examination of King John, then, teaches the same lesson as can be gathered from the instances already given : some of the deviations from historical fact are the result of the influence of the Chroniclers on Shakspeare ; others, and some of the most important, are the result of the dramatic purpose which dominates the work of the poet. History is for him subservient to poetry : he gains national sympathy and stirs national enthusiasm by appealing to English history ; he invests his plays with interest and dignity by taking some subjects from Roman History ; but in neither case does he allow rigid adherence to historical fact to over-ride the claims of his art, to interfere with the poetic purposes of his dramas—they are true to life in general and are not confined within the sphere of actual fact.

The antiquarian may cavil at anachronisms ; the "artisan"-historian may take credit for having pointed out violations of history ; but anyone imbued with artistic spirit cannot but feel that for such neglect of historical detail ample compensation is obtained. Such historical circumstances give a warmth and colour to the scenes ; but the characters, in their development by Shakspeare, belong not merely to the phase of a particular time, but to the permanent fabric of human nature.

H. J. HARDY.

THE STAGE-CRAFT OF SHAKSPERE.

AN ACCOUNT OF ITS ACCEPTANCE,
AND REMARKS ON ITS CHARACTERISTICS.

THE STAGE-CRAFT OF SHAKSPERE.

THE subject which is assigned to me would seem at the outset to lie almost entirely beyond the province of such a fraternity as our own and the experience of such a lay-brother as myself. Nothing is to be more deprecated than the attempt to convert a Society whose scope should be literary into a mere pale reflex of the Stage. An endeavour is made later on in these Papers to define its purposes, and I will only add that to foster theatrical bias or to chronicle stage history is certainly not one of them, while it is equally clear that the technical stage-fitness of our poet's dramas can be gauged only, if at all, by one who is himself actor, manager, or dramatist, only adequately by one who has experience of all these professions. On the other hand, it is quite certain that Shakspeare wrote his plays for the play-house, and bequeathed the rich store of his omniscience of men and things to be interpreted primarily by successive generations—not of editors, but of actors. The method and cunning of his Stage-craft are therefore of the essence of the literary value of his work. It would seem that, in studying his plays, the eye must as in fancy be busied with the scene which the dramatist projects on the theatre-boards, whilst the mind meditates the doctrines of life and wisdom as actively and as freshly as if the intelligence of an *auditor* apprehended their surprises for the first time. The poet's office as described by

Theseus in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, is to be precisely maintained in substance but precisely reversed in order ; if, indeed, he were himself wise in choice of form and exponent : or is it, after all, true of Shakspeare, as later of a Byron and a Shelley, that it was only by necessity and circumstance that the personality of his genius was clothed in dramatic garb ? or that as many another whom it were impertinent to mention, the stage craving, last infirmity of noble intellects, prevailed over the instinct of the poet and trammelled with meaner accidents a "spirit" which other-ways would "have struck fiery off indeed."

It has so long been the custom to deplore the absence of information about the man Shakspeare and his influence on, and estimate by, the generation in which he lived, that it has come to be accepted as an axiom that we know nothing at all. True, his life in detail must remain ever a mystery : his was not the age of biography or autobiography : but of the accidents and surroundings, it is only surprising that we can gather so many suggestive hints. The inquisitive persistence of societies and enthusiasts have made contemporary drama, satire, correspondence, and lampoon, aye, and serious documents, to yield their quota, more or less ample, to an enquiry which was assumed to be superfluous ; the votaries of a monstrous craze have compelled so grave an authority as Bacon to "give in evidence"—none the less valuable because undesigned. In the audience of the Curtain or the Globe we scarcely expect the open presence of statesman or philosopher : and though the theatrical appetite of Elizabethan England was shared by high and low alike, and the acknowledged masterpieces that fed it were produced before royal or noble audiences, or in the halls of the inn or the university,—still the reproach of the "loathed" stage and the equivocal associations of Shoreditch and Golden Lane seemed to stamp the

best utterance of the theatre with unimportance. The spontaneous notes and jottings of a Bacon are therefore worth volumes of panegyric. For the rest it may truly be said that there is scarcely a contemporary writer of what we may term the "*belles lettres*" who does not contribute testimony, willing or unwilling, to the unique position of our author. So, from the ingenuous teaching of some five hundred mostly unprepared allusions, and from the maze of innuendo, repartee, and illustration, in which the contemporary drama abounds, we can build up a very likely statement of the materials with which Shakspeare worked and the results and estimate of his work in the bustling world *in which he himself lived*, and thereby mount the first step of our enquiry.

One feature of the human face is, alike in life and after death, unerringly tell-tale of character. However the features of the Stratford bust (which an artist has assured us to be modelled from the death-mask) may fail in other respects to represent the living poet, in the firm cast of the mouth we may read still the decision of the original, the tenacity which makes the waywardness of the boy to work towards the purpose of the man. When the country lad, with the freshness of his Warwickshire lanes still blooming on his cheeks, and the memory of its Arcadian "customs, courtesies, and courtships" in his heart, picks up the "unconsidered" trifle from the "mud" *outside* the "Theatre in Finsbury Fields," content to reign "king over Shakspeare's link-boys," is it not with set purpose to rule, however it may be, *inside*? When he gains his first footing as "call" within the precincts, is it not certain that as Kean and Robson, and many another after him, he will pass on from lower to higher consideration till he, too, is a leading actor or a manager in his turn? Does not the Vicar of Stratford (a youth when Shakspeare dispensed

hospitality to poet, player, and preacher in New Place) speak with authority of the innate ambition of the actor which posted him first London-ways, not to failure, as is the usual lot of the victims of the passing stage-sickness, but sure of success and certain of his vocation? The same decision of character marks the sequel of the feverish hours of youth and manhood; when informed with a wisdom above all of his own or after time—a wisdom learned not from books, but by observation and study of manners, and in the school of adversity and vicissitude,—“scorning the base degrees by which he climbed,” once for all he “turns his back on the ladder,” and acquires, as yeoman and gentleman, “rich in land and beeves,” the old home of his boyhood and the “new” mansion which patience and perseverance had achieved.

Reject, therefore, the envious calumny which implies failure in the profession of purpose chosen by so typical an Englishman as William Shakspeare, because, without the aid of letters or patronage, it could alone bring him in contact with “all sorts and conditions of men.” Be sure that they are inventions of the same professional envy which never wearied of taunting him with his “little Latin and no Greek.” Welcome rather the hints which suggest as wide a range of art in the mime as in the dramatist; a repertoire including, in the *rôle* of a king “which he chiefly loved,” not only his own favourite creation of Henry of England, but mayhap also the most impressive of all kingly shadows, Lear; and among minor character parts—so realistic that they lingered in the memory of the spectators when the efforts of great tragedians were forgotten—the Ghost in *Hamlet* and the Adam of *As You Like It*; and in purely comic impersonations that of Dogberry (studied doubtless from the life at Stratford), of Feste, Costard, and Speed. Remember that

he could not, or he would not, displace Burbage, the "monarch of the stage" or Tarleton, "the whetstone of the wits," but there came a time when on the play-bill the name of Shakspeare takes precedence of all.

Take a glance also at the tiring-room when the play is over. See him in the theatrical purple presiding at the feast of fancy, holding his own, rather "peering a king" still over a court ennobled by rank, or versatility, or letters, or experience! "The rock, the tree, the running brook" are the school of this child of nature; the "trysting-place of wits" the university of his maturing genius; here are formed the friendships of manhood, with Jonson and Forman, Pembroke and Southampton; here are stored by oral teaching in a memory which "knew not to forget" the accumulated intelligence of specialists of every profession; nay, one could scarcely build an ampler studio, or more replete with models for the Painter of Humanity than the equivalents of modern "green room" and "wings" on the Elizabethan stage; remembering always that to the flame of his "brief candle" the actor attracts the human moths of every class, and claims his short term of popularity with the many, proud to crack a bottle with Roscius at the Dolphin, and anon passing him by with averted chin on the Mall.

From actor to adaptor is the first step in Stage-craft; from adaptor to creator the second.

The literary skill of Shakspeare must soon have been recognised. How long was the authorship of the "sugared sonnets" a secret? How soon was their author installed "Composer-in-ordinary" to the "Theatre" or the "Curtain"?

The hand of the adaptor can be clearly traced in the earlier plays taken *en bloc*, just as—though the birth-dates of the "children of his own fancy" be unregistered—it is not difficult to enumerate those of which he was "the true

and only begetter." Lax indeed was the law of literary morality and dramatic copyright in the reign fertile above all other in profusion of dramatic wealth ; we can excuse some girding at our Shakspeare for rustling in youth in a "handful of feathers" not entirely his own ; though a play was common chattel, scarcely property at all, not recognised as personal certainly when accepted by a manager, and liable under the constant strain for novelty to be produced again and again, "enlarged and amended" up to date. Anyhow, no better training for the play-wright can be granted than an apprenticeship in re-casting clumsy or archaic material, and an intimate knowledge of the existing drama, good, bad, or indifferent. The mode of transmutation, the alchemy which poured lead into the crucible of the laboratory and evolved gold, is not to our purpose, though "much might be said of it."

To the training in Stage-craft of the actor, the poet, the adaptor and the creator, early tradition and contemporary reference has added another phase of experience to the Ulysses of Literature. All self-culture is quickened by instructing others. Hamlet's advice to the players confirms, as it were, by personal testimony, the common impression that the name of William Shakspeare may well head the names of a company of which the said William Shakspeare was *master* and *instructor*. A famous player has said that nothing showed to him more clearly the points and propriety of a character or scene than training a novice in the rendering of it.

To mention only two proofs of Shakspeare's constant habit, it is remarked by John Downe, in his review of the Stage from 1663 to 1690, (a) that when the Davenant Company produced *Hamlet* the title rôle was taken by Mr. Betterton, coached by Sir William Davenant, "who saw Mr. Taylor, of the Black Friars, act it from the personal

instruction of the author, Mr. *Shaksepear* (*sic* !); (*b*) when *Henry VIII* was essayed under the same management, the part of the king was also given to Mr. Betterton, "trained by Sir William Davenant, who had it from Mr. Lower, that had his instructions from Mr. *Shakespeare* himself."

Thus, to his other qualifications as a practical dramatist, this many-sided man added also that which would best fit him to be critic as well as exponent of his works. So, when his salad days were past, when with ripe training and free hand he wrote not for the student but for the Stage, is it possible that Shakspeare could have produced matter suitable for the student and not for the Stage? There have been many well qualified to instruct in every generation who have so instructed us. We may dismiss the objectors of his own age with a single sentence. There were two schools of dramatic intention in the Elizabethan era: the school of the pedant and the school of the naturalist—the school of which Jonson was prime doctor and the school of which Shakspeare was high priest; between these two a fierce and necessary rivalry. Take *Sejanus* as the tragic type of the one, and *Hamlet* of the other. Read beneath the lines of half the comedies of the two schools, and you may detect still the marks of thrust and parry, of innuendo and repartee of the pupils of one and other, adding significance to many a now unmeaning dialogue and untranslatable allusion. The chorus of literary subtractors was disqualified by partisanship; what then was the verdict of Shakspeare's public? The scheme of our lighter essays forbids a parade of authorities to substantiate, as might be wished, the conclusions arrived at under this head:—(1) that it would be difficult to parallel the *contemporary* popularity of Shakspeare's plays; (2) that allusions to their stage success turn up so unexpectedly that it is evident that they exercised a kind of spell on the imagination of the public;

(3) that though it was not usual to print even the most popular drama (indeed the theatrical managers were very jealous of their exclusive rights) those of Shakspeare were persistently pirated, and an authorized, though grossly incorrect, edition of the most famous produced during his own lifetime ; (4) his name was attached to many which his hand scarcely touched, if at all, to satisfy a demand which was evidently urgent.

To support these assertions, extracts would have to be multiplied beyond all reasonable limits. I shall venture, therefore, once for all, to refer to two works, out of many, which are quite ready of access :—(a) the *Centurie of Praise*, and its sequel, published by the New Shakspeare Society ; (b) the unique and marvellously-cheap synopsis of scholarship and erudition, *Halliwell's Outlines*.

From the former the laborious reader will string together a curious chaplet of extracts, from the end of the sixteenth to the end of the seventeenth century, from undesigned allusions in prose and poetry, in pamphlet and broadside, in letter and panegyric, by friend and foe ; he will see his favourite passages burlesqued, as are the gems of to-day, in tribute to their popularity ; he will infer the gossip of the playgoer and the conclusions of the critic. Every day adds to the tale of these jottings ; e.g., the fortuitous discovery of an old box in the Lamport Library unearths not only a first edition of *Venus and Adonis*, but, *inter alia*, the lucubrations of an old "buck," whose taste in plays and playgoing was more omnivorous than discriminating, but who clearly indicates that Shakspeare was "the vogue."

From the second source of reference we may note how the plays passed from the theatrical to the reading public, or, more accurately, how the Shaksperian taste was stimulated by a perusal of what had been, or might

be, *seen*; and how men called out for "more, I prithee, more."

We shall all speedily confirm the modern verdict of a "desultory" but by no means unlearned "Reader," delivered before the Shakspeare-cult was properly opened out. "Shakspeare's fame posthumous, quotha! Why, he was unequivocally the most popular poet and dramatist of his day";¹ but with this qualifying addition, that his popularity was made and sustained (as he alone contemplated or conceived) by and on the stage.

Here would seem to be the fitting place to introduce some general remarks on peculiarities and limitations of Shakspeare's art which have influenced greatly his later acceptance as a practical dramatist, but which are in their nature accidental rather than essential. On essential qualities I propose to speak towards the conclusion of this essay.

I. No student can fail to have noticed in plays, bearing equally the impress of matured genius, equally the hall-marks of fertility of language, richness of illustration, and grasp of character-expression, a remarkable difference in concentrated incident and adaptability to stage effect.

One simple explanation is this: there were great differences in the circumstances under which different plays were produced, and there is therefore inequality in the Stage-craft as distinguished from the dramatic purpose.

There were years of rapid production; and during these some works were thrown off as they were required for the theatre and regular public, others were elaborated for private representation in the first instance before the Court, or at some nobleman's mansion, or in one of the learned Inns. To the first class may, I think, be

¹ *Notes and Queries*, 1855.

assigned most of the plays which were comparatively hasty in contrivance and heavy in construction; to the latter, many at least of those on all hands acknowledged to be scenically effective.

Again, there were years of deliberate workmanship, when the poet was no longer young, no longer personally connected with the theatre, though still interested in the fortunes of his own property and pledged to supply it with material; and to this period may probably be referred plays rich with the ripest product of thought and observation, but lengthy in action, and no longer checked by managerial and tutorial tact. I hazard as examples *Coriolanus* and the *Winter's Tale*.

II. A considerable portion of the plays soon lost their living touch by reason of their very closeness to contemporary life; for Shakspeare played often "to the gallery," and he kept interest alive by side glances at the gossip and the rivalries and the passing topics of the day.

Who realizes now that much of the effectiveness of the comedy in *Love's Labour's Lost* lies in its running satire on the jealousies of two leading poets? and that its very plot "had every feature of a political extravaganza"? In 1591 "Many English volunteers joined Navarre in France; the hero is therefore named Navarre, and his associates christened after Navarre's chief generals; there is allusion also to the attempt of Elizabeth's Government to come to diplomatic terms with Russia, and to the odd fancy of the Czar to marry Elizabeth; finally, the 'academy of letters,' of which a burlesque scheme is evolved in the play, had a real existence at the time, at least, in the minds of English statesmen and writers."¹

Or to cite a more serious example: it is probably not known to many intelligent readers now that in the "true

¹ Cf. a Paper by Mr. Sidney Lee, read before the N. S. Society on Oct. 22nd, 1886.

historie" of Henry VIII, the trial of Essex, by which men's minds were stirred at the date of its production, is verbally re-produced in that of Buckingham.

In fact, it may be said that there is no entire play, and in some plays no scene, which had not its appeal to the momentary interests of his quick-pulsed audience. All, all a dead letter, even to the next generation.

III. His quick-pulsed audience! yes, we must take that into account. Athenian audiences are a mystery; Elizabethan audiences more mysterious still. Was it the grandeur of the age in which they lived? or the might of the ale which they quaffed? or the "merrie heart," which has long ceased to be a symbol for England? What was it which fired their brains with intelligence and made them appreciate drama, whose power is, after all, literary, though human, not conveyed through incident or "situations"; the most exacting drama which the world has seen; of which, indeed, Shakspeare is but as a "Jupiter" in a sphere of planets; drama appealing to intellect and not to curiosity.

IV. It must be ever borne in mind that the whole galaxy of female portraiture—the great creations of Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra, of Imogen and Portia, and Beatrice and Rosalind, were conceived and painted for *boys*, and not *women*, to embody on the stage!

The first woman-actress was introduced by Killigrew with much apology in 1660; the famous enactor of female parts—Kynaston—continued to play till January, 1661. It is scarcely necessary to cite passages from Shakspeare in proof of this fact: to quote, *e.g.*, the familiar badinage of Hamlet with the player-troupe:—

"What, my young lady and mistress, thy face is valiant: comest thou to *beard* me in Denmark. Pray heaven thy voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring."

Or the poet's lament in the person of his supreme heroine :

"I shall see

Some *squeaking* Cleopatra *boy* my greatness."

And this would seem to imply a consciousness on the part of the playwright of disabilities under which this exigence of the sixteenth century had placed him ; and yet it is in the main doubtful whether this was really so—whether boys carefully trained by the master himself, apprenticed early, as they were, in classes of four, to some distinguished actor, did not, in fact, realise more faithfully the mere intention of the author. The names of Richard Robinson and Robert Goughe are mentioned in the Folio—Angel, Nokes, and William Betterton were famous for full half a century.—Stephen Hamerton was "a most noted and beautiful woman actor."—Of Kynaston, the most versatile of all, Pepys writes in 1660 that he had seen him act the Duke's Sister in the *Loyal Subject* at the Cockpit, and that "he made the loveliest lady that ever he saw in his life"; and Genest adds, from contemporary criticism, that "it was disputed among the judicious whether any woman that succeeded him touched the audience as vividly as he had done."

An actor has remarked to me that the *self-renunciation* necessary for romantic delineation is only possible for boys or the *greatest artists*, and I need not insist on the rarity of *artists* as such.

In young boys, at all events, the factor of personal vanity is absent, docility and faithful imitation of proposed models inherent, and boys may be trained when the mimetic talent is conspicuous to any degree of accurate copy ; as old members of our own Society may remember from successive generations of powerful boy-heroines.

But, besides these possibilities, which admit of dispute, it is patent that the most common artifice of Shaksperian

comedy—the disguise of women as lads—owed much of its *verve* to the employment of boys in these parts. Moreover, the costume of the time would completely conceal the sex of the wearer; and as in these days no actress is willing to abnegate the charm of her womanhood under the guise of Elizabethan page or peasant, much of the delicious naturalness of the *equivogue* is entirely lost.

V. And herewith I may incidentally remark that it is doubtful whether such a comedy as *As You Like It* can be ever realised under the existing *régime* of pseudo-historical accuracy, for, let the scene be laid in MSS. or playbill wherever it may, it is in Elizabethan *England* nevertheless that the action passes.

So to represent these “pleasant fancies” faithfully we must revive, not the landscape or costume of some Illyrian village or fourteenth century court, but an ideal Tudor garden, such as Bacon describes it, and such significant details of dress as would make an Orlando really believe his heavenly Rosalind to be no other than a saucy Ganymede. However, as this discussion will lead us into minutiae, which our limits of space forbid, I would recommend, in conclusion, a careful perusal of Grant White’s Essay on “How *As You Like It* should be acted.”

VI. We now arrive at the most difficult section of this interlude of limiting and discriminating. Of the poverty in decoration of the theatre of the 17th century there can be no doubt; of its general arrangement little. Niceties of time or place were of small consequence to a dramatist, who had only to indicate by conventional symbols a camp or a garden, a battle or a trial-scene. He relied on the imaginative faculty of his audience “to piece out these imperfections with their thoughts,” as he did on their keen interest in humanity to follow the minuteness of his

character-analysis. It was better in every way for him and for them. On the united competence and individual ability of his actors he could rely, and we may feel sure that the "acting" of the Shaksperian company, trained by Shakspeare himself, and by a *répertoire* as various as the spectators were invariable, furnished an *ensemble* of surprising completeness. It is quite clear that his plays are exacting in this respect, and that the meanest part demands almost as artistic a rendering as the greatest, and it is possible that if this essential excellence could be attained, managers might still dispense with extravagance of mounting. But how was the passion of a Richard, or the madness of a Lear, or the philosophy of a Hamlet maintained within the close circle of privileged spectators *on* the stage itself? We cannot solve the problems of the Elizabethan stage any more than of the Elizabethan audiences. Men seem to be cast in a different mould from ourselves: artistically I think that they were: just as we find in play-going centres of Germany at the present day, where the theatre is an element of common life, a strange tolerance of imperfect realism and a vivid susceptibility of ideal suggestiveness; and thus the very rapid change of scene, *e.g.*, which often banishes from the modern stage such masterpieces as *Antony and Cleopatra* or *Coriolanus*, was almost an aid to the Elizabethan spectator; his imagination was kept alive by being suddenly whirled from Athens to Egypt, or from Britain to Rome; much as that of the modern novel-reader when he turns a page and finds in chapter xxi that he has left his England and English mechanics of chapter xx, and is resuming his mimic life with a new circle of acquaintance in some island of the Pacific. On the other hand, in the absence of entirely trustworthy information, it may be permitted to doubt whether in some plays the com-

paratively rigid adherence to unity of scene does not suggest a greater profusion of scenic appliances, at least when originally produced amid noble and wealthy surroundings. It is certain that during our author's lifetime the mounting of court masques and pageants had attained a high standard of luxury and taste, and that within half a century of his death his own dramas were staged with much of "finery, cloaths, scenes and machines," as, for example, *Lear* ("exactly as Mr. Shakspear wrote it"), *Macbeth*, the *Tempest*, and the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The masterpieces of *Italian* fiction proved, as will hereafter be pointed out, the foreign emporium of the dramatists' plots; *Italian* literature was in the original, or through translations, the favourite resource of the leisured; *Italian* customs were imitated; *Italian* vices corrupted the simplicity of English manners: why should not *Italian* art have been applied to raise the standard of the English stage decoration?

There is extant a valuable treatise of one Sebastiano Serlio, published in Venice in 1584, giving particular directions from his own *observation* and knowledge as an architect for the construction of a playhouse and its appropriate apparatus. The work is illustrated by plan and picture, and there is appended to this paper a sketch of his conception of a "Tragic Scene" (*Scena Trajica*). Those which he describes in his work as contrived by himself or reproduced from his experience at Vicenza, where scenic luxury seems to have attained its acme, are so far conventional—as were indeed the simple expedients of the Elizabethan theatre—that all the necessary mounting of an entire drama is combined in a single scene. But in it much refinement of perspective, and careful illumination, was attained; and it is constructed with all *vraisemblance* of solidity and practicability. The scene for *extravaganza*

(*Scena Satyrica*) is a fanciful landscape, with foreground of rocks, and much intermingling of tree and shrub; for a comedy, a street of modest pretensions; for a tragedy, the suggestive but barbarous admixture of architectural elements, which are faithfully copied in our woodcut. It will be observed that some of the action supposed to pass within court or arcade require no further change, but that he contemplates the addition of painted cloths or drop-scenes to supplement the exterior by interiors. Many quaint suggestions are hazarded in the description which accompanies these illustrations, *e.g.*, *apropos* of the example, "La Scena Trajica, sarā ā per rappresentare Trajedia hi casamenti d'essa voglione essere di grandi personazzi perchioche *gli accedendi amorosi et casi inopitani morti violenti e crudili* (perquanti se leggi nelle trajedie antichi et ancho nelle moderne) sono sempre intervenuti *detro la casa* di Signori, Duchi, o gran Principi."

It seems to me probable that at the more sumptuous presentations on royal or private stages, or when Alleyn's company was transferred to the play-house specially built with a view "to the greater comfort of audience and actors," some hints in the direction of better mounting may have been borrowed, as the groundwork of the plays themselves was borrowed, from the "Nursery of the Arts."

Two of Shakspeare's fanciful dramas, at all events—the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Tempest*—seem to me to be unrepresentable *under any circumstances* without an appeal to the eye as well as to the imagination, though both were probably produced under favourable conditions and as *pageants de luxe*.

Nevertheless, I am strongly of opinion that the growth of scenic realism and extravagance beyond certain limits (difficult precisely to define), has a prejudicial influence on the ethic and poetic drama, which should and must rely



mainly on the ability of the actors and the spontaneous imagination of the audience.

VII. One more observation has to be made under the present section of my subject before what may be termed the narrative of the enquiry is resumed, and it must take the form of suggestion, as space will no longer permit discussion. It will be found, then, in the technically finished plays—plays, *i.e.*, which are clearly the work of a master and not of a 'prentice hand, produced, as I shall maintain, whilst Shakspeare was still in close connection with the Stage—that there is a subtle command of minute *theatrical* effect. For example:—

- (1) In the text still linger hints of the many artifices by which it is certain that in the original stage copies Shakspeare as manager had illustrated the work of Shakspeare as poet—the opportune shouts of the populace in *Julius Cæsar*; the clock striking; the alarm bell ringing; the music intervening.
- (2) The classical *irony*, which is an essential feature of Shaksperian Stage-craft, is interwoven with the very texture of the material.
- (3) The device of *contrast* is freely employed: as in *Macbeth*, I, vi; I, vii; IV, i; and IV, ii: in *Lear*, II, ii, and II, iii, and throughout the play.

I had purposed to review in detail two plays: one of the middle series of carefully-contrasted "stage dramas"—the greatest of all—*Othello*: and one of the final series—the most mature of "character dramas"—*Antony*: and I believe that I could have shewn conclusively how keenly in the one type the poet is conscious of the mesmeric influence of an audience, and adapts to stage-requirements the development of the plot and the evolution and arrest of the action; and how in the other the exigencies of

representation are quite subordinated to the instincts of the dramatic artist, whose object is to trace the course of mutual action and re-action of the characters on which the history depends, and to paint, as it were, in autumnal tints the idyllic love of which Romeo and Juliet had been the spring study, whereby issued so complete and varied a portraiture of wayward and imperious woman that it was indeed "abhorrent to his imagination" that some squeaking "child of the revels" should "boy the greatness" of Cleopatra.

To the kind intelligence of the reader is left the expansion of these hints; and now to resume the office of historian. We may, for the purposes of this essay, regard the period which Shakspeare himself, his editors and his actors initiated, as extending beyond his death to the closing of the theatres in the time of the Commonwealth. The temper of the audiences will not greatly have altered; the impetus towards more refined decoration, which is certainly a great determinant of taste, had only begun; the traditions of the actors and the estimate of plays and playing were practically the same.

In the blank period, alas! how great the loss; of most of the living memories of Shakspeare and proper conceptions of his characters and mode of representing them; of all the original stage copies and traditional directions; of many of the tried actors who had played with the poet and been taught by his lips! The classical Stage lives on its unbroken entail of stage property; so that when the playhouses were closed there intervened a "vast gulf of time" with no interpreting chorus to span it. And yet a curious proof of the popularity of certain Shaksperian scenes may be cited from the contemporary account of the "Drolls" (the interludes or farces which found their way riskily into entertainments, whilst plays, as such, were

suppressed)—in these the burlesque of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Falstaff and Hotspur scenes, and the Dogberry episode were constantly introduced : and it is possible that the Shaksperian clowns of our own day have inherited here and there original traditions from the venturesomeness of Robert Cox, sometime low comedian of Shakspeare's company, thereafter *impresario* of these far-off echoes of the Elizabethan *vox scenica*.

And with the original conceptions of his tragedy there lingered at the Restoration two associated links. The regular theatre was opened by Sir William Davenant, connected by family, and maybe by personal, predilection with the great "Unknown" himself ; and in his company played Betterton, to whose special competence to revive Shaksperian memories we have already made reference more than once. That *Lear* and *Hamlet*, *Henry VIII* and *Henry IV* were acted with little or no alteration of the text under these auspices would argue a survival of popularity somewhat astonishing in the reign of Charles II, were it not for the unrivalled opportunities which they offered to such an actor as Betterton. That *Macbeth* and the *Tempest*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Twelfth Night*, were purged of much of their poetry before they were subjected to the indifference of Charles and the sneers of Pepys, is a tribute to the poet rather than the reverse : for, in fact, no uninstructed imagination can fathom the depth of degradation into which the King and the Court had dragged the literature and manners of the Stage ; the very heart of its comedy was indecency, and tragedy reeked of the charnel house or wearied with its insipidity.¹

"The history of the Stage from 1660 to 1680 might be made vastly entertaining, but to quote the passages which ought to be quoted in order to show its real condition

¹ In the first Table appended to this Essay will be found a list of Shakspeare Plays represented during this period.

would be a source of danger, for we live in a refined age." What can we say of the taste which paraphrased the ideas and language of the *Tempest* by filthy suggestion and bawdy doggrel, and which put into the mouth of Ariel such amazing twaddle as this?—

"His soul stood almost at life's door, all bare
And naked, shivering like boys upon a river's
Bank and loth to tempt the cold air, but I took
Her and stop'd her in ;"

what of an age whose estimate of *Othello* can be surmised from the following criticism:—"Desdemona says: 'O, good Iago, what shall I do to win my lord again?' No woman bred out of a pig-stye could talk so. . . . There is in this play some burlesk, some ramble of wit, some show, some mimicry . . . but it is plainly none other than a bloody farce, without salt or savour."¹

But the fluctuations in moral and literary instinct may, during the reign of the later Stuarts, almost be gauged by the frequency and mode of representation of Shakspeare—complete, garbled, or travestied.

Now and again—and it is easy to suggest reasons—plays are introduced with much flourish of trumpets "as Mr. Shakspeare wrote them." More commonly the familiar title appears attached to the plagiarisms of some other hand, or under a new name (as Sir Wm. Davenant's highly-popular *Law against Lovers*, mainly built upon *Measure for Measure*) will be found an ingenious combination of more than one play; or, lastly, the original is *rectified* and transmuted, as the taste of the public might demand, from tragedy into comedy, or from comedy into farce, or, it may be, into monstrous hybrid of all types by the introduction of musical interludes and costly machinery. And so the downward career is hastened,

¹ The Tragedies of the last Age, considered by Thomas Rymer, of Gray's Inn.

and within a generation we have descended to the emasculated adaptation of Nahum Tate ; to the experienced but quite unprincipled conglomerate of Dryden ; and to the general predatory habit of minor poetasters.

Dryden gives us a valuable measure of the acceptance of Shakspeare's plays under date 1668 when comparing them with those of Beaumont and Fletcher : " Their plots (*i.e.*, Beaumont and Fletcher) were generally more regular ; their plays were the most pleasant and frequent entertainment of the Stage, two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakspeare's or Jonson's."

In justice, however, to Dryden, we should add that his adherence to the Theatre introduces some smack of a more discriminating taste, though from the all-pervading pollution no writer or manager could escape, certainly not the translator of Horace's Satires and author of the "judicious" (?) renderings into modern English of the most dubious of the tales of Chaucer ; at all events, it is not creditable to a recognised master in literature that under his direct auspices the low water-mark of Shaksperian stage presentation is reached. In many passages, amidst a cloud of indiscriminate censure and panegyric, Dryden points out carefully enough wherein consisted the inacceptability of Shakspeare on the Stage of the Restoration. Two notable phrases may be cited, "superfluity and waste of wit," "incongruity and want of originality (*sic*) in plot": for it is probable that the audiences in the reign of Charles II and James might well be intolerant of any "superfluity of wit" which demanded thought ; of equivocal sparkle there was an abundant home-supply, and the genius for contrivance and incident was never so great in England as at the end of the 17th century, being, in fact, not strictly English either by birth or complexion ; and the comparison cited above between Shakspeare and Jonson on the one hand,

and Beaumont and Fletcher on the other, is full of significance, for out of the whole sphere of Elizabethan dramatists (with all their abundant share of gross and suggestive expression) there are none who so nearly anticipate the unblushing effrontery of Wycherly, Congreve and Aphra Behn as the associated poets Beaumont and Fletcher.

Certainly, whilst, to our infinite profit, Shakspeare is altogether innocent of suggestive incentive to immorality, he lacks also the cunning spider-hand which seems ever to weave its subtlest web round the dark corners of intrigue. It is to this period, nevertheless, that we refer for the first time a distinct growth of literary popularity: in spite of the "dunghill" from which they "sprang," it is clear that as great a purist as Milton is familiar with the characters and thoughts of the dramatist; again, many allusions indicate the process of their assimilation into the common stock of ideas; nay, we can even quote an instance of his works being included in the "objects of study" which would supply to a "gentleman of quality" all that is "requisite and substantial." Noting, then, this *almost* new feature of claim, *to be read* as well as *to be acted*, and asking ourselves, without at present discussing, "Are these claims quite compatible?" and if so, in what way? we pass on "by leaps and bounds" over the century and a half which lies before us; for a careful chronicle would require a volume, but any theatrical memory will suggest the landmarks which guide us now.

Certain facts, however, should be borne in mind, though they are deduced from succeeding as well as preceding sections of our enquiry.

- (1) The revival of Shakspeare on the stage is sure to occur with the phenomenon of a really great actor.
- (2) It will be genuine or spurious, and less or more of the

one or the other, according as the actor and the audience are not only instinct with love of the stage but of literature as well.

- (3) In proportion as the spirit of a period partakes of the spirit of *romanticism* will be the measure of the Shaksperian cult.

The periods to be discussed may be roughly labelled with the names of (*a*) Garrick, (*b*₁) Kemble and Macready, (*b*₂) Phelps and the younger Kean: thereafter we should be, so to speak, moving in contemporary history, the lessons of which are either obvious or for the present illusory.

The above names are selected because they are, on the whole, fairly representative of certain theatrical eras, and are familiar to those who neither have nor care to have an exact knowledge of the English stage and its history, and because, representative as they are, the mere mention seems to support the positions enunciated; these names *only* are cited because a more thorough selection would convey little or no information to the general reader.

But what we may loosely term the Garrick period begins considerably previous to that actor's first appearance in 1774, and includes an array of histrionic talent truly marvellous; certainly no companies more competent to represent adequately the greatest plays were ever collected under one roof or performing contemporaneously. The names of Booth, Macklin, Delane, Quin, and Barry, of Clive, and Woffington, and Cibber, suggest a large range of capability, and present examples nearly as striking as that of Garrick himself of what may be termed the player "by compulsion." Nothing could have kept Davy from the stage; in mere versatility he probably surpassed all contemporaries; but in the genuine inspiration of the mime and enthusiasm for his profession he had many compeers: and, with traits and memories of others besides himself, the

pages of Steele and Boswell, Addison and Goldsmith, have familiarised the student of literature.

The impulse of the actor, and of the actor alone, directed them to the greatest source of an actor's possibilities, as it has impelled in later times others more out of sympathy by virtue of nationality than Garrick was by predilection, such, *e.g.*, as Ristori, Sarah Bernhardt, Mounet Sully; audiences meanwhile demanding a type of acting which the age of the Restoration was too indolent to appreciate. Before Garrick's star actually rose there was, therefore, in the middle of the eighteenth century, a very striking revival of the Shaksperian Drama on the English Stage; one incident of which is specially interesting to ourselves: from 1737 to 1739 there existed a veritable Shakspeare Society among the "ladies of quality," and their influence in particular was sufficient to cause the reappearance of many plays which had been consigned to the theatrical pigeon-hole. To oblige these fair enthusiasts the manager of Covent Garden revived *King John*, *Pericles*, and Part I of *Henry IV*, *Richard II* and *Henry V*, for the first time in forty years; *Henry IV*, Part II, and *Henry VI*, for the first time in fifty: almost simultaneously at Drury Lane were given *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, for the first time in twenty years, and the *Merchant of Venice*, with the Shaksperian conception of Shylock, for the first time since the Restoration: at Goodman's Fields the *Winter's Tale* for the first time for a century, and *All's Well that Ends Well* for the first time since it was written. Extant playbills record this striking analysis from the year 1738 to 1740 alone:—*Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Much Ado*, *King John*, *Cymbeline*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Othello*, *Richard III*, *Henry VIII*, *Merry Wives*, *Tempest*, *Comedy of Errors*, in addition to the more memorable productions enumerated above, making a *répertoire* of

twenty-six Shakspeare dramas in all, a record without parallel till we reach the famous tenure of Sadlers Wells by Phelps.

Simultaneous with the histrionic, we note a literary revival as well. The age of Garrick was also the age of Johnson. But the instincts of Garrick and his stage contemporaries were mimetic not literary, and of Johnson and his school, formal not romantic. Hence the revival of Shakspeare in the book-world, and the Theatre was partial and unsympathetic.

The critic finds "a lack of felicity and of finish" in the highest flights of the Shaksperian Muse, "a looseness of plot," "a coldness and weakness in the soliloquies," an "imperfection in the incident," and the like. The climax of national appreciation is probably touched by the familiar saying of Pope that "as Shakspeare has probably written better, so perhaps he has written worse than any man."

The manager, on the other hand, still deals with *Romeo and Juliet* as a tragi-comedy, and expunges the catastrophe from *Lear*, mangles the play of *Hamlet*, re-writes the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Tempest*, and perpetuates the alterations and amendments of Dryden and Davenant, of Tate, Lansdowne and Cibber. The age of the *scholar-actor* was not yet, nor did the critic insist on faithful adherence to the spirit of Elizabethan art.

A well-known episode of the theatrical annals will illustrate fitly the incidental perversion of taste. When Macklin was rehearsing the *Merchant of Venice*—with a view to restoring to the Stage the play as written by its author, and the part of Shylock into harmony with his idea—he did not allow any person, not even the actors, to see how he intended to act his part; he merely repeated the lines of the character, and did not so much as by one

single look, tone, gesture, or attitude disclose the manner in which he meant to perform it. "Quin said he would be hissed for his presumption, and (Manager) Fleetwood implored him to abandon the idea. . . . On the first night the theatre was crowded. When Shylock and Bassanio entered there was an awful silence ; a pin might have been heard to drop . . . but when Shylock finished the speech in which he declares his antipathy to Antonio, the audience burst into a thunder of applause, which continued louder and louder to the end of the play." The wonder is that the success of this essay did not encourage managers to emulate the example of the actor, and that Tate's *Lear*, Cibber's *Richard*, *et hoc genus omne*, were not consigned to the same limbo of forgetfulness as Lord Lansdowne's "Jew of Venice."

Before we resume the thread of this hasty narrative, we must notice a blank interval of some years, both in the history of the Shaksperian Stage and, significantly enough, of English literature as well.—That which we have very loosely termed the age of the Kembles and Macready may be said to open with the first managerial effort of the head of the former family in 1788, and to close with the retirement of Macready in 1851. The short succeeding era of Phelps and Charles Kean is, in fact, a sequel to the career of Macready himself, and might have been included in it, and this properly ends with the abandonment of the lesseeship of Sadlers Wells by Phelps in 1862. Both dates are memorable in social and imperial records for very different reasons, which will occur to anyone now of middle age.

Thus in literature the entire period is conterminous very approximately with the birth and progress to maturity of the romantic school in poetry and prose.

Within its limits the student may trace the gradual

evolution of a new development in thought and style, and will observe that, though the forms be new, there springs up a resemblance, more and more marked as we approach nearer the Victorian age, to the one with which in vigour, variety, and luxuriance, the present can alone be compared—namely, the Elizabethan. The circumstances external to the stage, but on which the stage is absolutely dependent, will therefore lead us to anticipate a revival of Shakspeare, differing from, but superior to, any which has preceded, and especially we shall expect to find it more sympathetic in the latter half than in the earlier, when running parallel with the productions of Keats and Tennyson, and Carlyle and Dickens, rather than with Campbell and Scott, and Edgeworth and Jane Austen, and when a Macready rather than a Kemble is administering the brief empire of the stage—passing on to his legitimate successors his own motives as an actor and a manager.

The circumstances within the theatres are equally favourable. It is an age of exceptional histrionic ability, of scholarly actors, of managers more and more appreciative of the literary as well as the mimetic attractions of their act. In partnership or rivalry with John Kemble are such men as Cooke and Young and Edmund Kean ; such women as Siddons and O'Neil and Mrs. Jordan : a single bill—as, for example, that to which Macready refers in after years with admiration and regret—may haply include many of the most gifted representatives of the past and the future ; in Macready's own company for the second season at Drury Lane are Phelps and Vandenhoff, Mrs. Warner and Helen Faucit.

Finally, the attitude of the editor and commentator towards Shakspeare as a poet and dramatist is undergoing a radical and well-nigh miraculous change.

In 1790 appears the edition of Malone, in 1817 *The*

Characters of Hazlitt, 1811 is the date of the lost *Lectures of Coleridge* (which mark the true passage of the Rubicon of Shaksperian criticism), and 1842 of the edition of Collier; and henceforward each year only swells the flood of eulogistic, eclectic, technical, philosophical, and antiquarian effort.

With such compelling circumstance from within and without, a new relation between the Stage and its representative poet is a thing of course.

The study of the characters of Shakspeare from the text of Shakspeare himself, and not from garbled or "improved" editions, is only what might be expected from artists so refined as the Kembles, John and Charles, Fanny Kemble and Mrs. Siddons. The restoration of the true text in its original and complete form to the boards is an accidental or more gradual process; its illustration by accurate costume, scenery and decoration, is dependent also on the growth and progress of the kindred arts. At first only the strong and irresistible dramas, such as *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*, are given as Shakspeare wrote them under the elder Kemble's first management at Drury Lane from 1788 to 1790; these are followed by less familiar plays, combining character and spectacle as the actor's study expanded and scenic luxury developed, by *Henry VIII* and *Henry V* and *Coriolanus*: and the choice of the last-named is due more to the instinct of the actor than the manager, for even to the present day its persistent change of scene renders *Coriolanus* very difficult of representation—the greatest living authority, the Duke of Meiningen, cannot see his way to playing it as it is arranged—but *Coriolanus* furnished to John Kemble the greatest of his parts, and his own most familiar *sobriquet*. Kemble's second management restored *King John*, *Cymbeline*, and the *Winter's Tale* in nearly their original form, and revived

King Lear, though it was Tate's—still Tate's—which held the Stage for the present.

The supreme fitness of Miss O'Neil and Fanny Kemble compelled the restoration of the *Romeo and Juliet* which the poet himself designed.

But in the same period it is still a fact that an actor so stupendous as Edmund Kean, for example, is satisfied with the *Lear* of Tate and the *Richard* of Cibber, and that the moral and literary atmosphere of the Stage is still so unsatisfactory that a vigilance committee of its worthiest members is convened to devise a remedy, and that as far as the truthful *illustration* of the Shaksperian drama is concerned, the reforms of Kemble had in substance touched nothing but costume ; so we must wait for the advent of an actor and manager with the recognised training of an English gentleman before the incongruous hybrid of poet and playhouse, to which the theatrical instinct had by custom and prejudice inured its votaries, was finally banished from the Stage.

It must gratify ourselves who are still rejoicing in the Victorian Jubilee to remember that it was in the year 1837, the year of the Queen's accession, that Covent Garden opened, under the management of Macready, with Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale*, and opened with this truly-artistic promise, namely, "To present the works of our dramatic poets, and chiefly of Shakspeare, with the truth of illustration which they merit. . . . The tragedies of *Coriolanus* and *King Lear*, for example, have been stripped of the barbaric pearl and gold, and are now to be given in the rude simplicity of their respective periods."

"With the *restoration of the text* the meaning of Shakspeare has been rendered palpable."

Opened also in a spirit which will amaze indeed those who associate with an actor's profession no purpose which

can be noble or elevating, but which we may surely conceive to have brought a blessing upon manager and audience, although, unhappily, not the pecuniary success which could alone make such an enterprise permanent.

Extract from diary of September 30th, 1837 :—

“Covent Garden Theatre opens. Before coming down I prayed from my heart to Almighty God, imploring His mercy upon me in the effort which this day begins . . . and entered the theatre with an invocation of God’s blessing upon me.”

In Table B will be found a list of the Shaksperian revivals consummated with patient fidelity during the memorable lesseeships of Covent Garden and Drury Lane by Macready.

But as at Covent Garden, so also at Drury Lane, it was impossible that without State subsidy or external help a theatre so conducted could thrive ; and henceforward Macready, who is, to my mind, the representative example of actor and manager combined, was compelled to resign the office of manager and confine himself to his profession as actor.

In 1851 he appeared at the Haymarket in Hamlet, Richard II, Lear, Benedick, Shylock, Wolsey, Brutus, Cassius, Iago, Othello and Macbeth, and left the Stage once and for all on the 26th of February.

A remarkable gathering assembled at a farewell banquet, and included most of the notabilities of society, literature, and art. The following extracts from the speeches delivered on that occasion by Mr. Macready and Mr. Fox will find a proper place here, as illustrating the theories of this essay, and justifying the extension of the title “The Age of Macready” to two other notable enterprises still to be noticed. Later on it will be convenient to quote from the suggestive speech of Chevalier Bunsen delivered on the same occasion.

"With the reflection, and under the conviction, that our drama, the noblest in the world, can never lose its place from our stage while the English language lasts, I will venture to express one parting hope—that the rising actors may keep the loftiest look, may hold the most elevated views of the duties of their calling. I would hope that they will strive to elevate their art, and also to raise themselves above the level of the player's easy life to public regard and distinction *by a faithful ministry to the genius of our incomparable Shakspeare*. To effect this creditable purpose they must bring resolute energy and unfaltering labour to their work; they must be content 'to spurn delights and live laborious days'; they must remember that whatever is excellent in art must spring from labour and endurance."

"Mr. Phelps, as one of the representatives of the future, had redeemed Sadlers Wells from clowns and waterworks, and made it a not unworthy shrine of Shakspeare, and a pledge of what the drama would be *before the impulse given to it by Mr. Macready* was exhausted."

Macready, then, was not only a unique exponent of the genius of Shakspeare, but also, in a sense, a founder of a School, whose efforts extended beyond the memorable year 1851 to 1862, and whose later professors, scholars themselves by birth and education, are still familiar to the elders of the present generation by the names of Samuel Phelps and Charles Kean. It was in association with Macready that Phelps learned his system; his first personal enterprise was in partnership with the younger Kean; afterwards, for a term of eighteen years, he carried on his work in the remote district of Sadlers Wells, literally permeating its denizens with the spirit of the Elizabethan literature, so that it was a marvellous thing when an original play was produced to observe how the audience would track a thought or a line which seemed reflective of Shakspeare or of Webster.

On May 27th, 1854, Phelps and Mrs. Warner commenced their joint management, and during their lesseeship "Phelps produced nearly every standard work in dramatic literature, including the feat, never accomplished before or since, of acting *all* the plays of Shakspeare except *Henry IV*,

Richard II, and *Troilus*." This singular page of Shaksperian history was turned when he took his final benefit in *Julius Cæsar* on November 6th, 1862. In all the revivals of Phelps the text of Shakspeare was faithfully followed."

Parallel for a time with the enterprise of Phelps, and supplying for a few years at the West End of London the vacancy left by the retirement of Macready, another brilliant campaign was carried on in Oxford Street. In November, 1851, the famous series of Shaksperian Revivals at the old Princess' Theatre was opened with the *Merry Wives*, and continued as detailed in Table C. In these, with the exception of *Richard III*, the text was Shaksperian, and the popularity phenomenal, the average run being about 85 nights, of *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Macbeth* about 120. But I am inclined to think that, though inevitable in a fashionable quarter and under the modern conditions of the Stage, such prolonged repetitions of a single play and of the same characters, were eminently destructive of art, and sufficient to account for the almost complete extinction shortly afterwards of the school of Shaksperian actors, which had continued with more or less of brilliancy during the whole combined period which we have thus shortly considered, and that, from the experience of later attempts to emulate the luxury of these representations and to supply by the scenic painter and machinist *only* the lack of an even *caste* and a trained company, arose the cuckoo cry that "Shakspeare spells ruin." Meanwhile, audiences had been already trained to a lust for spectacular effects, which was soon to be sated only by sensational drama and effeminate burlesque.

It is not surprising, therefore, that for many succeeding years the story of *continuous* Shaksperian enterprise in London is a blank. Nor is it without significance that whilst an artistic Court was at hand to encourage dramatic

art, dramatic art existed and was popular. It is in all probability a mere coincidence, but the coincidence is suggestive, that the first management of Macready synchronised with the accession of Queen Victoria, and that the systematized production of Shakspeare's plays, and that the last tradition of the golden age of Shaksperian actors, closed under the cloud which settled on throne and nation with the death of the Prince Consort.

It must be conceded that a far greater concourse of legitimate players was possible during the age of the Kembles than in the zenith of Macready, but I am of opinion, nevertheless, that, in aim and intention, in just appreciation of the text, in adequate though not excessive illustration of pure poetry by the service of all kindred arts, the highest realisation of "Shakspeare's Stage-craft" was reached in England when the prospectus of 1838 (already quoted) was affixed to the walls of Covent Garden.

And now for nearly twenty years the Shaksperian Drama is merely an occasional incident of management, doomed oftentime to failure because essential conditions of success are neglected and entire reliance placed either on a single "star" or on a gorgeous but unchastened "*mise en scene*." It is not to our purpose to take much account of the episode of Fechter's appearance, or of the revivals at Drury Lane under the *régime* of Messrs. Falconer and Chatterton; or even of the more notable presentations of *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Henry IV* under Phelps and Coleman, for there is in fact no *abiding* home for Shakspeare in the metropolis till Mr. Irving once more establishes his claim as *both actor and manager*; indeed, if we look for any element of permanence during the interval we shall find it not in London but in the provinces, and should have to chronicle the revivals of Mr. Calvert, terminating (as so many eras seem to terminate) with that

of *Henry V*; but, under modern conditions even more than of old, if there be a national theatre at all it must be in the metropolis, for to the metropolis the playgoer hurries by the help of the magic girdle which the nineteenth century Puck has set round the entire world.

This process of centralisation is at once an aid and a danger to the Shaksperian Drama.

Half a century ago the great actors made their first appearances, learned their business, and afterwards gathered, in companies more or less efficient, some of their greenest laurels on the provincial boards.

An old play-goer can remember seeing in the unpretentious theatre at Winchester (destroyed only a few years ago) no less a galaxy than Edmund Kean, Young, Cook, and Miss O'Neil in the same play.

The times are changed indeed.

Yet I am not sure that if our living Wykehamical enthusiast can only find leisure to extend the limits of his own art, and can only attract the dramatic talent of "the classes" to his management, and can only remain faithful under temptation to his own theories, he may not as *actor and manager* teach more with his travelling company and on precarious provincial stages of true Shaksperian Stagecraft than georgeous revivals in splendid theatrical palaces, to which "the classes" flock, and where a single play may run haply for a couple of years.

For, in the long run, "long runs" ruin the classical drama: actor, critic, and play-goer are equally effaced.

But though my intention had been otherways, time and maturer consideration determine now that the review of the present conditions of the Shaksperian Stage should be left to the competence of the reader.

One more effort of narrative therefore alone remains before endeavouring to draw to a focus some of the light

which the consideration of so many facts may have shed in the direction of theories.

Alas! that it should have to be stated—but as a truth it must be—that it is not to England really that we must look for the fullest development of Shaksperian criticism or the complete realisation of the methods of Shaksperian Stage-craft.

The *actors* of Italy have taught us in these later days, as they did even so early as the sixteenth century; the patient industry of the French have solved difficult problems of stage arrangement; but Germany furnishes still, as it has done for more than a century, the example of a *national* appreciation of the greatest of Teutonic poets, and of a *permanent* stage for the illustration of his thoughts and characters.

To avoid prolix and laborious discussion on this thesis, I cannot do better than quote from a speech delivered by Chevalier Bunsen on an occasion to which previous allusion has been made:—

“When after one century of bloody internal wars, and another of benumbment, about eighty years ago the national spirit of Germany had gathered strength to look around, he found himself in the fetters of the most conventional poetry and taste which ever has weighed upon poor humanity since the days of China and Byzaine: oratorical prose in rhyme, rhetoric screwed up to poetry, civilised galvanism mistaken for the rhythm of organic life. It was under such circumstances that the first of our classical giants—Lessing—arose, and in pure classical German proved that our models must be looked for somewhere else, and particularly in the dramatic art. Lessing pointed to two great constellations—the Athenian Theatre and William Shakspeare. He did more: he united with a great and genial actor—Schöder, at Hamburg—to give Germany a national theatre fashioned on these models (1768). When one decade later the immortal author of our greatest national drama—of *Faust*—when the bright star of Goethe rose on the horizon, his dramatic creed was the same—Æschylus and Sophocles and William Shakspeare. Again, when a few decades later, towards the beginning of this century, the noble pair of brothers, Frederich and William Schlegel, began to apply the united force of genius and philosophy and poetry to the creation of a

comprehensive system of poetical and artistic criticism and when their common friend, Ludwig Tieck, opened his delightful vein—both creative and critical—for the same object, who was the hero in whose name and to whose honour they broke down the idols of conventional poetry? Who was the hero who inspired both Goethe and Schiller and the followers of the *romantic school* but William Shakspeare and his theatre!

“The name of Shakspeare, then, was not the fashion of an age: it was no more or less than the expression of the deepest national feeling.

“The Anglo-Saxon mind reverently hailed the great kindred genius of England as the poetical hero of the Germanic race.

“Instinctive love and admiration has made Shakspeare the most popular name, and his dramas the most universally read poetical works among 40,000,000 of Germans.

“The foundation of a right understanding of Shakspeare is love. We Germans love Shakspeare. We do not love him for this or that, but for being what he is—the king of all dramatic writers of the world. To represent him in action is the divine privilege of dramatic genius.

“I have never been able to understand how anyone can love ‘Shakspeare’s plays’ without feeling the most lively interest for the national theatre on which his dramas are represented, and the highest regard for the great actor.

“In the age in which we live it is not the question whether we are to have a national theatre or not. The question only is, whether the theatre is to be conducted by libretto-makers and mechanical or mercantile managers, or whether it is to be regulated by first-rate men, both of intellect and moral courage. The question is whether we shall allow it to be disgraced into a slave of fashion and low amusement, or whether it is to be upheld as a high intellectual and moral school. . . . The German literature and nation have long decided that question. I have already mentioned that Lessing allied himself with Schöder, the celebrated German actor of his time. In the same way Goethe devoted a great part of his long, laborious, and self-devoted life to creating and maintaining a national theatre, and so did Ludwig Tieck for many years at Dresden and Berlin.”

We must however bear in mind that Bunsen speaks of a period in the history of German literature which is as truly *romantic* as the corresponding one in our own: without this spirit of “romanticism” there would have been no impulse towards claiming Shakspeare either as poet or player.

The work of criticism and of editing and of *representing*

Shakspeare, thus initiated, has continued unceasingly in Germany ever since ; and, though marred in the critical department by a characteristic fault of German taste, she is still ahead of England in these offices considered together : in complete rendering of the poet on the stage she is still as far in advance as she has been during the whole of the present century, except during that brief and palmy period when the eras of Kemble and Macready met and took hands, and a galaxy of histrionic talent was collected on the boards of the great London theatres, of which it is certain that we shall never see the like again. And at no time since Goethe, Schlegel, and Tieck united in giving to German literature an adequate translation, aye, and more than adequate, for in point and fidelity it is truly marvellous, has any "improved" or garbled version been permitted on her stage ; Shakspeare has been given to the German people in action "just as he is."

And, further, of all national poets (for Germany claims, and has a right in some sense to claim, Shakspeare as her own) Shakspeare is the most popular on the stage.

On one occasion I asked the manager of the Meiningen Theatre what dramatist (for the Meininger are equally at home in the masterpieces of all nationalities) his experience had found to be the most effective for stage purposes ? "Shakspeare, of course," was his reply. "What single play ?" "*Othello*. *Othello* is the most perfect piece of stage-craft extant ;" and incidentally this testimony, allowing for German bias and education, is not without its bearing on the practical question which remains to be discussed. For the Meiningen Stage, with its incomparable patron and its singularly vigorous actor-manager, has done as much as any of late years to support the reputation of Germany in representation of Shakspeare. There are but few of his plays which have not been essayed by the Meininger,

though not all with the completeness of mounting and research for which their productions are famous throughout Europe ; some plays have hitherto proved too costly, and others have defied arrangement for historical illustration.

Of the lists which I have obtained from other theatrical centres I append three, wherein by a glance the curious reader will be able to compare the Shaksperian tale for Berlin, Vienna, and Dresden of the last *three* years—at the Schauspiel Hause of the two former capitals, and the new Opera House of Dresden. No comment need be added, except the significant remark of the Intendant of Berlin “that the popularity of the different plays depends entirely on the adequacy of the *acting*.”

With this text ringing in our ears let us pass on at once (not before it is fitting) to the consideration of essential characteristics of Shaksperian art with respect to its adaptability for the stage, and to the gathering up of the lessons which our previous investigations have suggested.

It will be remembered that on some *accidental* peculiarities of his Stage-craft comment has already been made in this paper (p. 129 *et seq.*), *e.g.*, on the technical difficulty which a manager must feel in fitting to plays, never intended to be scenically treated, the manifold appliances considered now to be essential. I venture to add that the right to alter the order of scenes and the divisions of the acts must be conceded, and that by reverent treatment the purely *theatrical*, as distinguished from the artistically *dramatic*, effect may certainly be enhanced.

Again, exception is taken by *theatrically*-minded critics (it is needful again to emphasise the distinction) to the so-called weakness of Shakspeare's plots.

In the first place, it must be noted as a quality of the Anglo-Saxon literary instinct from the first, that to it the faculty of weaving an intricate web of incident, and of

contriving telling situations, seems in a measure to have been denied. The power of minute analysis, and of breathing into the personages of a mimic world the *vraisemblance* of life, is indigenous, but the groundwork of incident, the machinery which sets, as it were, the puppets in action, is *exotic*.

We read Chaucer for his pictures of men and manners, not for the tales themselves, for these are in no way native to the soil. So, too, the Elizabethan dramatist is generally careless of originality in the plot of his drama ; the common store of predecessor and contemporary is freely drawn upon ; each and all fly to the Italian *romance* and "convey" what they do not essay to invent.

It is precisely similar with the playwright of to-day ; the mantle of the *Improvisatore* has, however, been transferred from the shoulders of the Italian to those of the Gaul, and it is to the French playhouse or bookstall that he now resorts for his plot.

But, as a matter of fact, when, from the changes in the customs and habits of Englishmen, the play, as play, has ceased to exercise its spell over the *intellect*, and ceased to be a real factor in national life—ceased to educate as well as amuse ; when, as books multiply and cheapen, the novelist usurps more and more the office of the dramatist, we find that Fielding and Richardson and Scott and George Eliot exhibit the same exuberance and the same limitations of genius—they can create men and women but cannot contrive a network of circumstance whereby to environ them. So with the greatest of human observants of humanity. *Its* heart, with all its cunning variety, lies open before him as a book, and *his* scalpel records all the fine network of nerve and motive and passion. But to incident, other than as frame or setting for his characters, Shakspeare was comparatively indifferent.

So, judged by the standard of *theatrical art*, his plots may be properly called "thin"; whereas, judged by a higher standard of *dramatic* and inductive criticism, we shall probably be surprised to find how completely delusive is the traditional estimate: for, as Shaksperian plot depends entirely on character-study, its method is, of necessity, different from that of the modern melodrama with which the critic is unconsciously comparing it—it is also subsidiary. Again, the ethos of the Shaksperian Drama is romance; it arose in an age which we deem "romantic," and it flourishes, as we have seen, in periods which we again characterise as "romantic"—and, when we speak of an age or period as "romantic," there is no great necessity for defining a phrase which carries with it its own *essential* explanation. But there is, beside, a *verbal* meaning of great importance. The Elizabethan Drama is *romantic* also, because "it uses the stories of romance, and histories treated as story-books, as the sources from which the matter of the play is taken. Romances are the raw materials. Shakspeare and his contemporaries start, in their art of dramatising, from story which is already a form of art."

I should wish to refer the reader to the book from which I have quoted the above suggestive sentence, and which disposes very completely of the fallacies which have encouraged the old idea (for it is the invention of the eighteenth century) that Shakspeare's plots are defective.¹ It would be easy to show in particular cases—*e.g.*, with reference to the various tales which are employed in the plays of the *Merchant of Venice*, or *Lear*, or *Cymbeline*—that they could not be more cunningly welded for the purpose of developing the action of the characters than they are; and, further, that to displace the order of the

¹ Moulton's *Shakspeare as a Dramatic Artist*.

scenes, though it might improve the plays *theatrically*, would mar them *dramatically*. It is indeed a lower form, not of art, but of piecework, which issues in the elaborate woof of intricate spiders' webs, and by all experience it implies as its "raw material" much employment of criminal or immoral intrigue, and much study of the police or the divorce court. Of course, the vulgar play-goer will cry out for the latter and decry the former, but the judicious and cultivated intellect will know better how to weigh the claims of these diverse schools, "the approval of which one" may well "outweigh a whole theatre of the other."

There are many devices of the Shaksperian plot, however, which cannot appeal to any but a highly refined sense. These I must enumerate without discussion :—

- (1) *Irony*, producing action and catastrophe.
- (2) *Sustained contrast* of character ; necessitating combination of contrasted stories—light with dark, severe
- (3) with trivial, etc.—leading on often to *more than one climax*.
- (4) What the writer from whom I have quoted terms "*enveloping action*," and defines as follows :—"When the personages and incidents which make up the essential interest of a play are more or less loosely involved with some interest more wide-reaching than their own." Compare the "enveloping action" of *Lear*, *i.e.*, the French War ; and of *As You Like It*, *i.e.*, the fortunes of the banished duke.

Theatrically, such devices tend to confuse ; *dramatically*, to interest.

It is time, therefore, to introduce this distinction, which, so far, has been only emphasised in type.

Shakspeare's "Stage-craft" is *dramatic* rather than *theatrical*. This is its essential characteristic, and it directly limits the scope of its appeals.

I can scarcely believe that there ever could have been a time when the *popular* taste was spontaneously attracted to the *romantic* drama, any more than to high-class music or to high-class art in any form: the sense for *art* is a trained sense; in one age there is more of general training, and in another less: granted, therefore, the conditions of the Elizabethan audiences, or of the German protected theatre, or of Drury Lane in 1858, and Shakspeare will again be in England—as it is in Germany to-day—popular in the widest sense. Mr. Irving writes to me that he has found “that Shakspeare is more remunerative than any other entertainment.” Unfortunately, Mr. Irving appeals to a limited audience; and from the circumstances of the Stage, although his revivals are illustrated by unparalleled magnificence and unique managerial instinct, and are textually faithful to the original, they still lack, to my judgment, the indispensable adjunct of an adequate *caste*, supplied—as only it can be supplied—by a company trained by time, tradition, and variety. All honour be to the present master of the classical drama for what he has given; it is impossible to give that which is dependent on an unbroken heritage from the past. The fact is, that our highest dramatic literature is exacting, and I call attention to a phrase which drops, as it were, mechanically from the pen: it is “literary-dramatic,” not *stage-dramatic*: it requires, therefore, a trained audience, a trained company, and a theatre in some way, by State or private patronage, *protected* from the fluctuations of popular taste.

Why, for example, had Macready to abandon his purpose, undertaken with high aims, and persevered in against detraction and opposition?—not because he lacked the support of the public, but because the demands on him, from the tenure of his theatre, made the entire difference between success and failure. Had he held it

in trust from the nation or from a circle of patrons, had he been by public or private guarantee secured against temporary depression, very probably then no such times of depression would have occurred, and so the admirable *ensemble* of 1837 might be possible in 1887.

There is no saying how the whole tone of the Stage would be raised by the protection of a single theatre from the lowering of tone.

We have seen that in proportion to the purity of manners is the theatrical popularity of Shakspeare; it is a remarkable test. We have seen that at the head of the theatrical profession should be, as it were, an auto-type of Shakspeare himself—an artist-actor and artist-manager combined. Many incidents of the present era are antagonistic in England to the appreciation of Shakspeare's Stage-craft: a busy world seeks for light entertainment when it permits itself to be entertained: railways span the country, and the "country cousin" is content at his annual visit to the metropolis to surfeit himself with the plays which have exhausted the patience of the Londoner: the play-goer is an extinct species; so also is the "pittite"; so also the intelligent lay-critic of the Stage.

On the other hand, the amateur with artistic proclivities will travel the world over to see a perfect artistic performance: Bayreuth and Wagner attract the American from beyond the sea, and the Britisher from his insular prejudice.

Between the demands of Wagner and the demands of Shakspeare there is a close affinity; between the art of Shakspeare, purely dramatic, and the art of Wagner, musico-dramatic, there is a unique resemblance. Wagner was inspired by Shakspeare; the example of the Wagner enthusiast may in turn teach the Shaksperian to what instincts he should appeal, and by what methods he should

work. Thoroughness, training, devotion, protection, are needed for the one and the other.

In every art there is at the present hour a craving for the archaic and the romantic, in every artistic temperament a desire for a space to escape from the dull monotony of modern realism.

But is it, after all, a fact that Shakspeare is a poet for the closet and not a dramatist for the stage?

I confess that I commenced this paper with a conviction in the former direction ; I close it with a conviction in the latter. The books which I have read and the testimonies which I have gathered have persuaded me that the best critical and æsthetic interpreters have derived much mature inspiration from the living illustration of the Stage.

"The great actor is the real hypothetes of the prophet and the best interpreter of his meaning." "All the arts are linked together, and when dramatic poetry is connected with painting, sculpture, architecture, and music, it affords the most ennobling pleasure which the mind can enjoy."

All and each of these arts is needed to elucidate the "Stage-craft" of Shakspeare. Granted this ; granted, therefore, high purpose in the professors ; protection from the State or by patrons ; a trained public ; a company secured by privilege from the monotony of "long runs" ; and an actor-manager, in touch with literature, refined by a liberal education, encouraged by the brilliant, however ephemeral, recognition of his art ;—and England may yet again be, as in days gone by, not only the tomb of the prophet, but his shrine also ;—so that, instead of the English enthusiast seeking illustration of his fancies in German capitals, the German, rather, shall claim *his* freedom of the poet by a visit to the land which gave birth to and inspired him.

C. H. HAWKINS.

APPENDIX.

TABLE A.

SHAKSPEARE PLAYS GIVEN DURING THE PERIOD
OF THE RESTORATION.

- 1660 *Othello*.
1 *Henry IV*.
Midsummer Night's Dream.
1661 *Hamlet*. ("No play gained more money or reputation.")
Romeo and Juliet (altered by James Howard).
1663 *Twelfth Night* ("rectified").
1664 *Henry VIII*.
Henry V.
Macbeth.
1667 *Taming of the Shrew* (altered by Lacy).
Tempest (adapted by Dryden and Davenant : in it Sycorax, sister-monster to Caliban ; Hippolito, a man who has never seen a woman ; the "weapon salve," retained by Kemble as late as 1789).
Merry Wives of Windsor.
Henry IV.
1669 *Othello*.
1672 *Macbeth* (as an opera !).
1673 *Tempest* (as an opera, by Shadwell).
Hamlet (with omissions and transpositions).
1678 "All for Love," Dryden's adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra*
(kept the stage till date of Kemble).
Timon of Athens (altered by Shadwell).
Titus Andronicus (altered by Shadwell).
1679 *Troilus and Cressida* (altered by Dryden).
1681 *Richard II* (Tate's).
1 *Henry VI*.
King Lear (Tate's, with love scenes, comic endings, etc., retained more or less till time of Macready).
1682 *Coriolanus* (Tate).

NOTE.—It is quite as significant to note what plays are omitted as what are given.

TABLE B.

PLAYS PRODUCED BY MR. MACREADY.

COVENT GARDEN :—

1837 *Winter's Tale.**Othello.**Hamlet.**Macbeth.*

King Lear. (This was all but withdrawn from the difficulty of finding a representative of the Fool : it was acted in all respects as Shakspeare wrote it, except that the acts were divided differently.)

*Coriolanus.**Romeo and Juliet.**As You Like It* (Rosalind—Helen Faucit).1838 *Richard III.**Henry V.*

Tempest. (This, for the first time since the Elizabethan age, precisely as Shakspeare wrote it, and with every conceivable artifice of staging, machinery, and scenery. It was produced on October 13th, with Helen Faucit as Miranda, Miss P. Horton as Ariel, Harley as Trinculo, Bennet as Caliban, Macready as Prospero, in whose diary the following entry records the impression made :—"October 14th. Could not recover myself from the excitement of last night ; the scenes of the Storm, the flights of Ariel, and the enthusiasm of the house, were constantly recurring to me.")

DRURY LANE :—

1841 *Merchant of Venice.**Two Gentlemen of Verona.**King John.**Macbeth.*

TABLE C.

REVIVALS AT "PRINCESS'S" UNDER
CHARLES KEAN.

-
- 1851 *Merry Wives of Windsor.*
 1852 *King John.*
 1853 *Macbeth.*
 1854 *Richard III*—Cibber's version (ran for only a few nights).
 1855 *Merchant of Venice.*
 1856 *Winter's Tale.*
 Midsummer Night's Dream. (Ellen Terry, Puck, *æt.* 8 ; Harley,
 Bottom.)
 1857 *Richard II.*
 Tempest.
 1858 *King Lear.*
 Merchant of Venice.
 King John.
 Much Ado about Nothing.
 Hamlet.
 1859 *Henry V.* (The last and most costly.)

TABLE D.

NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIONS OF
SHAKSPERIAN PLAYS DURING THE YEARS 1884-86
AT THE
REPRESENTATIVE HOUSE ONLY OF EACH CITY.

	BERLIN. Times.	VIENNA. Times.	DRESDEN. Times.
<i>Hamlet</i>	9	9	5
<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> . .	17	—	6
<i>Richard III</i>	4	5	4
<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> . .	8	7	4
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	4	8	4
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	28	9	3
<i>Richard II</i>	2	1	1
1 <i>Henry IV</i>	4	1	1
2 <i>Henry IV</i>	3	1	1
<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	14	2	6
<i>Othello</i>	5	5	4
<i>Winter's Tale</i>	20	7	—
<i>Macbeth</i>	—	8	3
<i>Julius Cæsar</i>	—	5	3
<i>King Lear</i>	—	2	2
<i>Coriolanus</i>	—	4	6
<i>Taming of the Shrew</i>	—	6	5
<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	—	4	—
<i>Henry V</i>	—	2	1
1 <i>Henry VI</i>	—	1	—
2 <i>Henry VI</i>	—	1	—

THE FOOLS OF SHAKSPERE.

THE FOOLS OF SHAKSPERE.

THE fools, by profession, of Shakspeare's making are something less than ten in number. Something less, inasmuch as amongst the fools proper and unashamed are not included such hybrid natures as Jacques and Malvolio. Two alone of them have certain names—Touchstone and Costard ; their fellows passed into immortality nameless. In trying to give form and aspect to the feeling of them, "hard, hard, hard it is only not to tumble, so fantastical" are they and elusive. About them clings and rings an air charged with laughter breaking at the close, and radiant with glowing affection. In their quick interchange and whimsical play of phantasy with fact, souls heavy with the burden of tragic fates can find a wisdom hidden from the martyrs of sin and sorrow, unknown, from its worthy worldliness, to Othello and to Lear. Trouble and weariness and sour sorrow, from the girding lips of these fools, receive a light that transfigures with shafts of mockery and homely comparison. It is with us and them, as though the wise of the world, masters of lore and experience, stood by the world's ways casting their hoarded wisdom into the air and upon the wayfarers in peals of laughter and with gentle malice : an exaltation of the cap and bells, in a world where motley's not the only wear, but has disguises.

In this quaint fellowship of fools, five are noteworthier than the rest. Headed by the dearest of them, "the sweet

and bitter fool" of Lear, they troop past in the Masque of Merriment to the jangling of sweet bells ; Touchstone from the Forest of Arden—"Le bouffon Touchstone et la naïve Audrey," laughs Gautier ; Costard, from the faery or elf-land of Navaire ; he of the Countess of Roussillon, "no great Nebuchadnezzar," indeed, but "a shrewd knave and an unhappy" ; and, to close the procession of Folly with Holiness, Sir Topas, demurely reading Rabelais, from the land of Illyria. "Infinite riches in a little room" are here ; a medley of virtues and peccadilloes, malice and devotedness, jocund jesting and pitifulness. There lurks in this company of kindly cynics and flouting clowns no fool of the vulgar sort, no hireling whose humour rings false or vile ; none such as vexed the austere, pure soul of Dante at Verona, where—

"There was a jester, a foul lout
Whom the Court loved for graceless arts ;
Sworn scholiast of the bestial parts
Of speech ; a ribald mouth to shout
In Folly's horny tympanum
Such things as make the wise man dumb.
Much loved, him Dante loathed."

The friendly fools of Shakspeare's making were sworn to the service of gentle ladies and courteous lords and an outcast king : love in their folly prevails over the defilements that clog an overflown spirit of Rabelais, and bring dissonance into delightsomeness.

Lear's fool alone suffers to be drawn at length. His brethren, for all their grace or interest, are too slight for more than the merest sketching in outline. The prominence given to "the sweet and bitter fool" is his clear due as an actor in the most dreadful and holy drama of the world ; a tragedy, where the highest, wildest, and lowest passions of heavenly and earthly and hellish spirits are created in substance of flesh and blood, making the "act and agony of tears" to be felt in soul and senses.

Before the Fool's coming into view and audience an affection of goodwill welcomes him : Lear, self-discrowned, but dishonoured past possible conception by unnatural fallings away from filial love and duty, calls, in the growing whirlwind of righteous wrath, for the Fool, and thrice : "Where's my fool? I have not seen him this two days." He is answered by a knight of his grudged troop—not, in all likelihood, a keen noter of cause and effect in shifting humours, but here, for once, infallible—"Since my young lady's going away into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away." This matter of fact mode of speech, in its directness and simplicity, establishes the unseen fool in all hearts ; not least in the hungry and angered heart of Lear. "No more of that ; I have noted it well." The broken king has brooded and lingered over the miseries of his love, which are the resolves of his pride. Cordelia is gone. But her father, strong in each warring passion, has noted well the ever-recurring changes of her absence : the Fool's sorrow at the loss of Lear's outcast daughter has bound the two mourners in the bond of a shared desolation.

Through the earlier scenes, embittering preludes to the full storm of passions, the Fool is constant with his biting sallies, strengthening, for all he be but a fool in his folly, the soul of a ruined father and despitefully entreated king. Each riddle upon riddle, each fable upon fable, cleaves to the heart of the matter ; and the homely grotesques of phrase, possible to an "all-licensed fool," are so many efforts to bear up the shaken self-trust of his lord and friend. Well writes Coleridge that Shakspeare "brings him into living connection with the pathos of the play." And Lear, with an impressiveness that is heart-breaking, responds to the humours of folly in pity's guise. His "My pretty knave ! how dost thou ?" "Why, my boy ?" "No, lad, teach me,"—these gentle and simple words, caught up amid the

terrors of a speech that does well to be angry, are strangely moving. Staunch Kent and devilish Goneril agree to discern a something not altogether the spirit of jesting in this jester: "This is not altogether fool, my lord," and "You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master." And with a sublime foolishness, which is indeed something more than witless folly, he goes with the appeal, "Nuncle Lear, Nuncle Lear, tarry and take the fool with thee!" Soon the first flash is struck out of the darkness before the midnight of horror. Regan rejects him; Goneril has rejected him; Lear, in the outburst opening with the words "Oh! reason not the need," closes the holy denunciation with words more dreadful than all else: "O Fool, I shall go mad!" He turns to the merry fellow of his constant companionship, the man of shrewd wit and pleasantries, the jolly fool; and to him Lear confesses that he must presently become one of the foolish—not as a fond and faithful fool, but, by the agonising compulsion of distraught nature, thrust with blinded soul to the outer darkness: "O Fool, I shall go mad!"

Hard upon the pathos of this conscious cry comes that revelation of awe in the highest, no more even by Lamb to be extolled than by Salvini to be enacted, when Shakspeare, in the great words of Hugo, "*Prend la démence, qu' il partage en trois, et il met en présence trois fous, le bouffon du ciel, fou par métier, Edgar de Glocester, fou par prudence, le roi, fou par misère.*" Misery, incarnate in the father spurned, the king set at naught, baring his heart to the night and "winter winds, not so unkind as man's ingratitude," and waited upon by Folly, "who labours to out-jest his heart-struck injuries." If it savour not of presumption, one would say that in these supreme places Shakspeare has reached a higher iambic music to clothe wherewith a higher imagination than elsewhere at all in his

work. To this effect writes Hugo in the historic preface to his *Cromwell*: "Parfois peut le grotesque sans discordance, comme dans la scene du roi Lear et de son Fou, mêler sa voix crierde aux plus sublimes, aux plus lugubres, aux plus rêveuses musiques de l'âme." And side by side with such deep wonders there is room for such splendour of piteousness as this :—

Lear.—My wits begun to turn.
Come on, my boy : how dost, my boy ? art cold ?
I am cold myself. Where is the straw, my fellow ?
The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool.—He that has and a little tiny wit,— [*singing.*
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain !—
Must make content with his fortunes fit ;
For the rain it raineth every day.

Lear.—True, my boy. Come, bring us to this hovel.

The pity and passion of this are soon over for the "*fou par métier.*" Perhaps there have not been spoken words more touching at leaving life than the Fool's "I'll go to bed at noon." Those among the critics are assuredly in the right who take them thus, as gentle folly's ending before the time. For Lear's cry of anguish, "And my poor fool is hanged !" must be a cry over Cordelia, for all the reasons of beauty and circumstance and simplicity. The Fool already is dead, his nature strained to death, heart-broken. And the highest comment has been made upon the Fool when Lear calls upon his daughter, lost and found and lost, by that gentle name, and makes her "*folle par grace de ciel*"—fool by sweet nature and frailness and world's usage.

Thus much, but not to disproportion, for the "sweet and bitter fool," whom the Fates made acquainted with tragedy. Nearest to him, yet at a distance, is Touchstone,

shrewdly laughing down the forest—fierce-haunted, yet pastoral—of Arden : that Arden of Warwickshire, lions notwithstanding, which had William of Wykeham once to Warden. He, too, follows into exile ; and this is the engaging manner of his outset :—

Rosalind.—What if we assayed to steal
The clownish fool out of your father's court ?
Would he not be a comfort to our travel ?

Celia.—He'll go along o'er the wild world with me.
Leave me alone to woo him.

But, further, for a contrast with that bitter exile—

Now go we in content,
To liberty, and not to banishment.

Touchstone is the spirit of laughter at crosses, where sulkiness is the common display ; a man who jests with Fortune in her humours, with dry jollity. Far from being a Mark Tapley, that odd creation of the Ben Jonson of novelists, he would succumb to the passions of Lear ; but his is the lighter task, to beguile a weary way and a venturesome romance, and not to assuage heart-wounds with quips and cranks. Something of the soul of Heine, coarsened and dulled and embruted, to fit the mould of a “roynish clown,” is in Touchstone. His grotesques concluding a flight of fancy, his merry irreverences, and his fantastic trick of cross allusion and application, bring to mind the yet incommunicable tears and laughter of the dear poet. Touchstone's transforming view of things, which is his wit—his alternating epigram and sententiousness—make him a rare feast for the dainty and matured melancholy of Jacques, the embittered and humane cynic, the jester's well-bred counterpart. The contrast of these two—one of the uncounted contrasts of temperament and circumstance in which Shakspeare luxuriates—gives occasion to an anatomy of melancholy in all its phases most wonderful under the greenwood tree. The meeting of moralist and

LEAR'S
TOUCHSTONE

merry-man is conceived in well-meaning malice ; the wealth of Shakspeare's humanity, observant and piercing, has spent itself upon this enchanting chance, which makes of the merriment moralising, of the moralising merriment. To the cynic, whose cynicism is one half a conscious predisposition towards epigram and things sardonic, the discovery of a fool i' the forest, a fool by profession, is matter for richest paradox. From the vantage of the jester's license, Jacques would with biting words regenerate "the infected world"—Stylites a-snarl. So wildly can the *bourgeois* Touchstone work upon the forest philosopher. In and out among the scenes of the woodland Jacques steals with complacent chuckling over the humours of the little world. He will go so far, as Master What-ye-call't, as give away a wife to his treasured motley fool ; for is not Touchstone a right good materialist in marriage ethics, and a casuist of the best, when Corin the shepherd or forester William be the disputant ? "Good my lord, like this fellow" is Jacques' formula of introduction to the Duke for Touchstone. To this *connoisseur* in human kind, motley is a rare specimen, "very swift and sententious," and gifted with many a "dulcet disease" of folly invaluable to the student of humours. He has knowledge of the Seven Paths of Quarrel, and in his brain

"strange places crammed
With observation, the which he vents
In mangled form."

In Jacques' phrase be valediction to "this motley-minded gentleman" and faithful fool. "Is not this a rare fellow, my lord ? he's as good as anything, and yet a fool."

Shakspeare's distinction between fool and clown becomes clear when Costard follows Touchstone. His adjective is rather "blunt" than "gentle." The clown is the rural humourist—rough and ready, honest and perverse. He

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has none of that sweet unreasonableness which makes the jester ; he is a logical fallacy incarnate. In Navarre, that inimitable land of braggarts, pedants, peasant wenches, courtly ladies, rustic dignitaries, and princely lovers—a medley of men and women, one and all a little mad—Shakspeare's young genius wantons and runs riot in rime. The artless play is one laugh, broader or more delicate, as it marks the mind of fair lady or rude clown. Costard, with his frankness and *naïveté*, his audacity and lightness, has charms peculiarly his own. Set off against his mother-wit are Dull and Holofernes—Dr. Goldsmith and Dr. Johnson, as graceless Grub Street once called them—no unfamiliar faces yet, and the chivalrous hidalgo, roistering Don Adriano de Armado, Don Quixote degenerate in the third degree. Moth, “Sweet ounce of man’s flesh, incony Jew!” promises to grow to the spiritual stature of Touchstone, being already “a most acute juvenal.” Slight and occasional as these characters may seem, it is yet in these that Shakspeare displays the discrimination of knowledge which makes his work, in the high phrase of Keats, a “thing real, such as existences of sun, moon, and stars, and passages of Shakspeare!” Gradations of humour, distinctions of folly, shades of oddity, are with him separate and real. He knows the village wag from the village natural ; *Hofuarr* and *valet*, bumpkin and wit, live each after his kind. And this play of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* has this amongst its charms, that it shows so clearly at the outset the young power of the dramatist to realise life in the right way—“image the parts, then execute the whole.”

The fool whose wit in *All’s Well that Ends Well* flouts and contrasts with the braggadocio of Parolles, though hardly so omnipresent as others of his tribe, contrives to suggest a definite personality. “Shrewd and unhappy” is

a shrewd and happy summing-up of his characteristics—quaint and pregnant. He is the indulged, it would seem the matured, servant-friend, whose tongue may wag and freely trip in his lady's chamber with never a scolding. But his jests at life constitute him in his place a low-born Jacques. His railleries serve to amuse the fading wits of his mistress, the old Countess; she plays with his fancies and dallies with his impudence. A pleasant picture they make together; the wizened clown, his features puckered to a sour jest, and the stately dame, shaking her sides like Mrs. Quickly at the constant whimsicalities of her dead husband's favourite:

“I play the noble housewife with the time,
To entertain 't so merrily with a fool.”

Enter Feste, the jester of Illyria, so named of tradition. With him Malvolio, whose ill-advised motley is not the right wear, that is only yellow stockings cross-gartered. In this “strange pair of beasts” yet another artful contrast is intended. The pragmatic “fool of quality”—or, at least, of office—divides with his spiritual comforter, Sir Topas, the diverse laurels of folly. This jester is the purest and most perfect household fool, though his jangling is less tempered by an attention to the fortunes of his masters than is the merriment of many amongst his brethren. In him the careful artist is clearly seen. Rabelais is his text-book of fool's lore, and the maxims of Quinapalus his *credo*. Jaques' characterisation, “motley-minded,” is to him “misprision in the highest degree.” For “*Cucullus non facit monachum*”: that's as much as to say, I wear not motley in my brain.” To the delectation of Sir Andrew Aguecheek—“many do call him fool”—he will study to tell of “Pigrogromitus and of the Vapians passing the equinoctial of Queubus”—most gracious fooling—and in his mouth Shakspeare puts some of his most musical songs,

for the clown "takes pleasure in singing." Art for art is his chosen precept ; he tends and cultivates his follies. Of sages, Pythagoras is his elect, and the foes who set him down an ass he prefers to the friends who make of him an ass with praise ; for he would fain profit by self-knowledge. In the art, further, of persuading others into double-dealing he excels. The hearty flavour of fun pervades his nature—impudent, fearless, and quick. In him are well shown the relations of wise men and the declared fools ; by abandoning the conventions of thought, which do duty for original wisdom, he returns to his mother-wit and thrives thereon.

Meagre as is this adumbration of Shakspeare's lively fools, it still may serve to bind in one cluster a rare society. Rare, for many reasons : of which the palmary may be the perfect peculiarity and distinction which mark the society of Shaksperian fools. The conception of singular persons, whose singularity is at once their brand and privilege, is universal. Mexican Montezuma and Macedonian Philip had each his fool ; if Neronian ladies plumed themselves on monstrous dwarfs, ladies of Queen Anne revelled in black-amoor pages no less. It would seem to be inbred in men that they should delight to witness something removed from the common level of mankind ; that an occasional glimpse into the quainter ways and freaks of nature should excite their curious interest. Of which interest the form and fashion must vary between higher and lower impulses ; between the impulse of human sympathy and the impulse of human curiosity. The history of fools at large shows the latter and lesser in the ascendant. As to a collector a smudge, a blot, a disfigurement invests some cherished Rembrandt etching with a greater value than a rectified after-copy can possess ; in this way the sane, safe souls of the majority take pleasure in witnessing eccentric humours

or misshapen bodies. The brilliant gibe or biting sally, issuing from the lips of wry-faced folly, achieves an electrical success. Grave companies and corporations have indulged the laughing taste ; the Catholic Church had her parodist boy-bishop, Winchester her junior's terminal license to abuse his prefect, Oxford her racy silvern Latinist, the *Terræ Filius*. Fantasticality is the first, uncouthness the second requisite : but everywhere and when the desire has been to rouse and titillate work-a-day souls with a taste of Yorick's quality.

And most useful is the study of fools well taken in hand, for, "in this world there are more fools than men."¹ And George Meredith, our wisest, is at one with Heine in these words :—"Our sympathies, one may fancy, will be broader, our critical acumen shrewder, if we accept the thing 'fantastical' as a part of us and worthy of study." The murmured comments of the imperial crowd in *Faust* express the same burden :—

"Zwei Schelme sind's—verstehn sich schon—
Narr und Phantast—so nah dem Thron—
Ein mattgesungen—alt Gedicht—
Der Thor bläst ein—der Weise spricht."

The fool being thus established on the basis of mediocre minds demanding him, his handling by Shakspeare should be of singular merit : as is the case indeed. That his fool creatures are alive and capable, has been seen by the sketching of them ; it remains to make clear their distinction from the fools of others.

The tradition of the Elizabethan stage preserved—something as the Italian stage preserves Pulcinello from times anterior to Rome—the figure of demon or devil from the old moralities. As Vice, or Belzebub, or Apollyon, the buffoon ranted and roared to the accompaniment of broadest farce. The spirit of spectacular enjoyment that

¹ *Vide Schupp, Words of Wisdom, p. 1121.*

in the Middle Age broke loose in the Feast of Fools and the Feast of the Ass, found its formal channel in the Miracle Plays and the Moralities. In these the high dogmas and histories of the faith were travestied, now by burlesque, now by would-be solemn performance. Their interest, for our purpose, is centred in the comedian professed. A strange confirmation of the satyr side of human nature is given by the fact that, in the Power of Evil, obscene, riotous, grotesque, honest English men and women found their yearly source and well-spring of laughter. Not that deliberate evil lent a horror to noble revolt, nor that pruriency was an element of pleasure ; but, whilst neither Milton nor Petronius would have sympathised, there remains a convulsed idea of moral obliteration in natures thus revelling in scenes from the *Walpurgisnacht*. In the extreme only is this true : but tendencies are only in extremes to be estimated.

Having, then, this comic power ready to hand, the Elizabethan dramatist cast about him for its application to life. The stage was no longer a scene for allegory ; the fresh breath of the time cleared off the mists and veils of "economic representations," and left it free for the acting of men and women's lives, crossing and entangling, struggling and working out some end. In comedy and tragedy alike *vraisemblance* was the ideal. From the Power of Evil, coarse and rude, sprang the Fool. The application of that earlier form to the facts of life resulted in the finding of nature's cracked workmanship in man—unaccountable, malign, tender, or side-splitting. The Fool came to light once more. In his admirable study of the fools and clowns of Shakspeare, Mr. Douce has hardly insisted upon the peculiar turn so given to their character. He treats the fool too much as a stage puppet, and without regard for his conception in the poet's brain.

If we look at fools contemporary or subsequent, their point of difference from Shakspeare's fools will prove to be their lesser degree of substance. They are either funny fellows of the stage or distorted natures ; Shakspeare's are men of passions, humours, and feelings like to, whilst different from, those of other men. Touchstone and Feste can not be considered lightly, or labelled, each with his humour, as for Ben Jonson's cabinet. It is characteristic of M. Taine that he writes about Shakspeare's fools : " L'imagination machinale fait les personnages bêtes de Shakspeare." If so direct a negative may be affirmed without provincialism, one would deny the *dictum* wholly. There is nothing mechanical in the ways of Shakspeare's work.

It must be enough to refer merely to the work of others in the same line ; a little care soon brings to light the main dissemblances. In Greene's *Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1594), take Ralph Simnell, Prince Edward's fool, and Miles, Bacon's poor scholar-servant ; in Marlowe's *Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1588?), take Ralph, Robin, and the clown ; in Marston's *The Malcontent* (1604), take Passarello, the " old choleric Marshal's " fool ; and from Ben Jonson take any of his innumerable wags and jesters ; and from Kyd or Tourneur extract what element of folly may lurk in their shadows, and the difference is apparent at once. These lesser fools and humourists are a " criticism of life," but they live apart in a region of roistering merriment and prescribed clownishness. The beauty of Sterne and Heine, unsearchable and suddenly startling, meets us in the human learning of Shakspeare, who knew the world better than any man, not being its designer, has known it. And with the worthy successors of Shakspeare the knowledge indeed remains, but bitterness of some sort has infested it. Davie Gellatley, in the first-born book of the great Shaksperian, Scott ; Cino

Galli, in the first-born of Mr. Swinburne ; Triboulet, in the dreadful work of Hugo, *Le Roi s'amuse* ; Dagonet, in Lord Tennyson's *Idylls* ; Archie, in Shelley's strong fragment of *King Charles* ; the Fool, in Michael Field's Elizabethan tragedy out of due time, *Loyalty or Love* ?—how melancholy, how piteous are all these ! A change has passed over the pleasures and instinctive joys of England, which gives to wit the dirge instead of the ditty. In that singular and unapprehended book, *Dagonet the Jester*, the change is told in strong, strange English : how "the sap of the merry greenwood and the life stream of England's wanton revelry" froze and died with the death of Dagonet, an imagined last lingering jester of the ancient kind :—

" No ! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years."

Hear a jester's portrayal of jesters :—

" O rage ! être bouffon ! O rage ! être difforme !
Toujours, cette pensée ! et qu'on veille ou qu'on dorme,
Quand du monde en rêvant vous avez fait le tour,
Retomber sur ceci : ' Je suis bouffon de cour !'
Ne vouloir, ne pouvoir, ne devoir et ne faire
Que rire !
O pauvre fou de cour ! c'est un homme apres tout !"

Or hear Cromwell, Carlyle's practical humourist :—

" Qu'il est heureux, ce fou ! Jusque dans White Hall,
Il créé autour de lui tout un monde idéal !
Il n'a point de sujets, point de trône ; il est libre,
Il n'a pas dans le cœur de douloureuse fibre !
. qu'il est heureux !
Sa parole est du bruit ; son existence un rêve.
Et quand il atteindra la terme où tout s'achève
Cette faux de la mort, dont mal ne se défend,
Ne sera qu'un hochet pour ce veillard enfant."

Or hear Arthur's fool answer Arthur's knight—the one dour, the other forsworn :—

“ Swine? I have wallowed, I have washed—the world
In flesh and shadow—I have had my day.
The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind
Hath fouled me—an I wallowed, then I washed—
I have had my day and my philosophies—
And thank the Lord I am King Arthur's fool.”

But Launcelot is recreant, and the world bitter, and—

“ I am thy fool,
And I shall never make thee smile again.”

Reality, then, and humanity are the notes of Shakspeare's fools. They live, and are not outside “ the kindly race of men.” A poet, than whom none living is truer, seems to put into words their fashioning in the deep mind of Shakspeare—

“ Ramp, tramp, stamp, and confound
Fancy with fact,—the lost secret is found.”

Common life, consecrated, stirs in the world of Shakspeare, and to the fools it is given to lay bare something of the springs of pity and comfort, something of the secret of laughter and cheerfulness. And they do this, not by rant or vulgarity, but by hearts prompting tongues, in weal or woe. They are part of that which Hugo, despite Mr. Morley's disgust, rightly calls “ le sourire idéal ”—the joy of the whole earth.

Triboulet and Dagonet fail us ; Cromwell was wrong ; only the jesters of Shakspeare serve our more jaded and dustier day. In their quaint voices pleads the voice of that Merry England, which is more than myth. Not the England alone of morrice-dance and May-pole, but an England where sincerity of manners and freshness of thought, amid all the frolics as old as the world, created a belief in the value of simple life. Honesty, courage,

friendliness, were the old-world virtues of the inspirers of that generous age : filled with the gravity befitting citizens of the world, some men went their ways like Plutarch's men, but with the gentler graces of their faith and higher reverence. There was never, in truth, an age so minded in its entirety ; but something there has been in the past, an unnamed influence, which the present misses ; and were Sir Topas of Illyria on earth again, he might be loth to exchange Pythagoras and his foolishness for the subtler wisdom of elaborate despair and melancholy born of culture.

For, were Sir Topas on earth again, these birthmarks he would find upon his successors ; plain to view upon a whole class of workers in literature and philosophers in society. And had he assumed or assimilated to himself the spirit of his new age, he might amuse his learned leisure by tracing out the pedigree of modern melancholy, from the shrewdness of Montaigne and the wise laughter of Rabelais to the tempered causticity of Mr. Arnold and the chastened gravity of Mr. Pater. He would find the degeneracy of his Elizabethan fellows trailing through the mysterious age of the Stuarts, as wit turned to far-fetching and humour to conceit, and a habit of mind gained ground that accepted these. Where once Raleigh wrote the *History of the World*, feeling power and light for the labour, since he had worn his manhood upon the New World seas and the court of Gloriana, now Burton anatomizes Melancholy. In his imperfect sight melancholy is a province of human nature, justly asking as careful a consideration as the *Ecclesiastical Polity* itself. It is the age of Hobbes and Herbert, Donne and Crashaw, Norris, Ferrar, and More ; of men whose names and dates may fearlessly be mingled, on the strength of their common bond. That bond is an extravagance of mental habit ; a wandering, whether to Christian Talmud-

ism, Catholic Quietism, Anglican Platonism, or Erastian expedience, outside and beyond the strict limits of what is generally wholesome. An atmosphere is about, in which the Fool hides his cap and bells, and lurks in the folds of a Geneva gown or lies ensconced in the lawn of Oxford doctors and mitred men. Exclusive gibing is at an end, for folk are grown at once too wise and too foolish, too anxious and too trivial, to enjoy one hearty intellectual laugh at the world. Even Izaak Walton, peacefully angling among the water-meads of Itchen, his mind running on Marlowe's lyric and no less on the bombast of Du Bartas ; full of love for the venerable and courteous Provost of Eton, and no less for his "dear son" and unworthy son, Cotton,—Walton has not escaped scot-free from the infection of oddity. Despite the charm and beauty abundant, the age, as a whole, is warped from the Elizabethan vigour. And Sir Topas, continuing his research into continuity, would skip with a *Benedicite* over the strange years, in which the strained brains of England gave way to madness, and such grim jesting sprang up as might be amongst the warring chivalries of Loyalist and Puritan ; when there sat at last upon the throne, Dictator in all but name, a "gloomy brewer," who played monkey tricks at Whitehall banquets, and made England honoured through Christendom. Clearly the professional jester was not wanted. But Cromwell died, and Charles, the Martyr's son, came back to live with a will. The oppressions of war and disorder vanished from the surface of things, and the grievous mental travail and labour from their heart. All the Hudibrastic tendencies in human nature towards what is laughable and pleasantly provoking became delirious at the reaction from earnest turmoil and real disturbance to a revel of licence and indifference. But how deep the difference between the land of Illyria and the land of England !

between a land where Olivias were mistresses and Sir Toby and Sir Topas and Sir Andrew were roisterers, and a land where

“flared Charles Satyr’s saturnalia
Of Lely nymphs, who panting sang ‘ More gold ;
We yield our beauties freely ; gold, more gold ! ’ ”

Not even gentle-hearted Lamb’s apology can sweeten all the wit of Farquhar and Congreve, Etherege and Rochester, Dryden and Vanbrugh. It is rotten wit, with nothing of Helicon or Castaly in it, unredeemed by any pastoral savour of Sicilian grossness. To this wit of recklessness succeeds, as the nation settles down to stable growth, the sterling worth and wit of the *Spectator*, of the *Citizen of the World*, of *Tom Jones* and *Roderick Random* ; succeed, too, the bitter and bestial genius of Swift, the wilful and blinder humour of Sterne. And to these succeed in due course the “best-beloved” Lamb and Scott, Byron with *Don Juan*, Thackeray the historian of humourists. And to these latter dead legion succeeds, with flippant novels, ingenious essays, quaint verse, and universal superiority of manners : and with “beauty and anguish walking hand-in-hand” on every side of literature.

Only by straying thus far from the fools of Shakspeare can their serene supremacy be established without demur. The spirit that conceived them appears on a higher ground, with wider vision, than the spirits of after craftsmen. If, as Coleridge and Schlegel said, the fools play the part of a Greek chorus, they are the chorus to every form of tragedy and comedy ; meeting life at all turns with answers as tersely convincing as the *sententiae* of Horace and Seneca, and by a great deal wiser. Their collective wisdom is not a reckless laugh, nor a curious fancy, nor a plain man’s mediocre jest ; it is deeper than Addison, stronger than Goldsmith, gentler-mannered than Byron,

not less spiritual at heart, though less in expression, than Thackeray. They lack a store of "sonnets and subtilties"; but their remedies against the evils of a sweet and bitter life are to laugh with love, to be sorrowful with smiles, and to seem ignorant of formal philosophy and the fashions of an exacting world.

L. P. JOHNSON.

GHOSTLAND AND FAIRYLAND.

GHOSTLAND AND FAIRYLAND.

IT is in no way the object of this paper to attempt an historical account of those phenomena which are commonly classed under the name of supernatural. The history of the belief in Ghosts and Fairies can only be adequately traced by one who is acquainted at least with our own folk lore, and is obviously beyond the scope of a paper like this, or a Society such as ours.

Nor again, does it approach the subject from the point of view of an inquirer into the marvellous. Psychical research was not, I take it, among the aims of our founders—*viderint sapientiores*.

Nor thirdly, attractive as the inquiry might be, is it intended to try and elicit Shakspeare's personal views upon the supernatural, or at least any that are not purely negative. The results of all such investigations as that must to a certain extent be fanciful, and must entirely depend upon the way in which, and the attitude with which, each separate reader or student approaches his author. And with the dramatist in general, and Shakspeare in particular, there is always the danger of forgetting the circumstances of the writer; of looking for logical exactitude in a work whose primary object at least was dramatic, and which was written for the contemporary stage.

The real interest of the subject for us is twofold—literary and dramatic. We can try to see how the poet

takes and treats the current popular superstitions ; how he transmutes them by the magic of his genius ; and how by their aid—weak masters though they be—he gives visible form and substance to his own ideas, and bodies forth his thoughts upon great subjects which from the beginning have been bound up with the life of men.

Strictly speaking, there are three divisions of the subject, corresponding to the threefold nature of the mysterious beings presented to us. There are the ghosts or spirits of mortal men departed, and the fairies and spirits immortal. Both of these I believe Shakspeare uses to symbolize actual though almost inscrutable realities. Between them, in varying degrees of relationship, stand the wonderful mortals of the *Tempest* and *Macbeth*, who unlike in many respects, yet have as their essence supernatural power exercised by human agents—descendants in the direct line of the professors of necromancy of old. It is with the first two of these three divisions that this paper is meant specially to deal. Be it remembered again that no problem is solved, no philosophical explanation attempted ; only the poet's imagination clothes his ideas in mystic dress. Let us then take the golden bough and enter Ghostland.

I.

Sunt aliquid Manes.

The popular ideas about Ghosts in the Elizabethan age, as the poet incidentally lets them fall, do not appear to have differed materially from those contained in latter-day legend. Horatio has fears that the Ghost may blast him : nineteenth century novelists make dogs and even human beings struck dead by their power. Bernardo and Marcellus urge Horatio, as a scholar, to use the exorcism of the Church : John Wesley is said

to have exorcised spirits from his own nursery. Cross-roads, graveyards, and the witching hour of the night were then, as now, intimately associated with awful visitations : then, as now, the visions were as invulnerable as the air, and came and went as the winds of heaven. Some beliefs may be traced back to the classical period. Hamlet's Ghost bids his son farewell, as soon as the glow-worm shows the matin to be near : not otherwise does Anchises leave his duteous Æneas when he feels the breath of the steeds that draw Aurora's car.¹ This is the only belief for which superstition gives a reason, and even here it speaks with no certain voice. It was part of the punishment of the elder Hamlet to return perforce at daybreak to his prison house and suffer fresh tortures of purifying fire : yet in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* we are told that Ghosts wilfully exile themselves from light, for fear it should look upon their shame. It would be overfanciful to try to reconcile such discrepancies or to construct a definite detailed theory. It is not likely that there was any such present to the poet's mind : he merely collects various forms of the same popular idea, and in due season brings them forth from his treasure house.

Such beliefs as the foregoing illustrate the raw material of common superstition, out of which Shakspeare constructs, as of primal earth, a visible shape for his own thoughts to animate and inhabit. Further than this they do not concern us : they are common to all ages. But before we leave them altogether, one, at least, demands a passing tribute—the beautiful legend of an holy time, when even among the Ghosts the wicked cease from troubling : for the birth-night of Him who knew no sin is never haunted by the wanderings of the most sinful.

¹ *Æn.*, v, 738-9 :—" iamque vale ; torquet medios Nox humida cursus,
et me saevus equis Oriens afflavit anhelis."

Where much is misty and doubtful, one thing stands out in absolute clearness. The three Ghosts in Shakspeare—for those in *Richard III* and *Cymbeline*, as will be shown, are not properly included in the category—come after, and as the result of crime. Not ordinary or commonplace crime : that the dead Hamlet makes plain beyond the shadow of a doubt—

“ Murder most foul, as in the best it is :
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.”

The man who for the kingship murders his brother even in the blossom of his sins and marries with his brother's wife ; the king, who with the very words of welcome on his lips, devises death to his own familiar friend ; the patriot and philosopher, who “ in a general honest thought and common good to all,” kills even the man to whose heart he is nearest ; these are they to whom or for whom such visitations come—men who have either sunk into the abyss of sin, or who have striven with the utmost self-torture to exalt their crime into a virtue.

Mark further, in the first case, the awful suddenness of the vision. The murdered king appears immediately after the marriage, the moment his brother's sin is ripe in all its fulness ; the ghost of Banquo comes hard on the heels of the murderer, who, with the blood marks on his face, brings the tidings of the deed ; even so, after his vengeance, does Orestes' brain reel as the Furies of the dead rise up and pursue him till the guilt is purged away.

Again, whatever the cause of their coming and whatever its limitations, they have absolute free will to determine to whom they will appear, of whom they shall be seen or heard. Where it is essential that the secret should be kept, they appear to none but the principal agent or those in his confidence ; where they haunt a criminal, they come about his path and about his bed ; they come to him alone, but

their effect may be seen by all. Lady Macbeth and Gertrude know nothing and see nothing of the visions which appal the husband and the son ; to them the evident horror is the very painting of fear, the coinage of the brain, the creation of ecstasy, just as the slave maidens see Orestes gaze and start and flee, though the black-robed pursuers are hidden from their eyes.¹

There are three objects with which the ghosts come, corresponding to the three-fold result of crime which the poet wishes to illustrate ; taken together, they almost amount to a complete analysis. The spectres appear either to stimulate to revenge, to infatuate and drive to further crime, or to warn of coming doom : always to punish : never, like Protesilaus, to reward a long fidelity ;² never to bless with promises of prosperity or peace. These three objects are best illustrated by a brief separate study of the plays concerned.

There are five appearances of the Ghost of the murdered Hamlet : two before the play opens, to Marcellus and Bernardo ; three during the action of the play itself. It is interesting to notice the way in which, and the people to whom, the vision comes, to observe their different attitudes to it, and its behaviour to each of them.

As an avenger, it comes only to the innocent and to its instruments : not to the guilty King or Queen, nor, *in the first instance*, in the palace, where, even if not seen by them, the obvious effect would be to put them on their guard and mar the greatness of the vengeance : but outside, on the platform, to friends of the young Hamlet, to men who can preserve an absolute secrecy. And—though a

¹ *Æsch. Choeph.*, 1051-2.

² Wordsworth's *Laodamia* :—" I am not sent to scare thee or deceive ;
But in reward of thy fidelity."

Cf. also Aytoun's *Hermotimus*.

minor point certainly, yet as illustrating the care bestowed by Shakspeare upon minutiae—notice how the place and manner of its coming are typical of its object. It comes on the platform, the place of arms; it comes to warriors as a warrior, armed in complete steel from head to foot, to do battle against the murderer: with eyes intent and fixed, as though it would show even without a word how unalterable and unbending is its purpose—every detail in harmony with the main idea, preparing the way for what is to follow. Again, not with the same attitude to all. To Marcellus and Bernardo it does not offer to speak; (they, for their part, neither suspect that it portends anything nor attempt to question it; they simply fear and doubt. When Horatio appears “it would be spoke to,” and though on his first challenge disappearing, it is about to speak when the cock crows. Horatio, on his part, challenges it at once, and sees that it must come with an object. But he fails to hit its true significance; he thinks it bodes some strange eruption to the State—that it is somehow connected with the Norwegian troubles, of which the late King had been the centre and focus. Yet he and the others are so far right that they are persuaded it will speak to the young Hamlet: and to Hamlet it beckons and speaks at once: while he, even before he sees it, at the mere story, suspects the truth—

“All is not well: my father’s spirit in arms :
I doubt some foul play.”

The others are afraid it will lure him to destruction; he is absolutely unshaken; the only thing which moves him is eagerness to know all.

As an avenger, again, it is the practical mainspring of the *action* of the tragedy: it sets all the machinery at work. Its object is to stir the at present unsuspecting Hamlet to revenge: to awake his spirit—which otherwise

would only have brooded on all his misery—to action. But the action to which it would stir him is beyond his powers, and he staggers under the very thought of it. His weakness brings self-accusation with it—

“ Yet I,
A dull and muddy mettled rascal, peak
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause ” :

then, doubts of the Ghost and longing for surer knowledge—

“ I'll have grounds
More relative than this.”

Next comes a second acknowledgment of his weakness, and in the play scene the definite test of the story. Doubts are gone now—“O good Horatio, I'll take the Ghost's word for a thousand pound”—and there rises the new resolve: but this in its turn is upset by the sight of the King's prayer. It is at this moment that the Ghost comes a second time to whet the almost blunted purpose; comes in the Queen's presence, though unseen and unheard by her; no longer as a warrior or in the place of arms, but pleading for mercy even amid the craving for vengeance. It is here that the poet's art is at its highest. The Queen, though she sees and hears nothing herself, is dismayed by Hamlet and by what he has seen and heard; her inmost soul is wrung with remorse, and she shows it by her silence towards the King. The Ghost's discrimination between the offenders has not been bootless, and the vengeance is the greater in that it falls only upon the most guilty.

In this Ghost of the murdered King, then, Shakspeare is trying to find a sensible expression for the promptings of an almost supernatural power within us—a power which can stir the strong to action and move to remorse those who are not too deeply sunk in sin; but which again, working upon a nature too weak for the burden, may shake the doubting mind with self-torture and drive it to

the very brink of madness. The idea and the manner of presenting it were neither of them new; dramatically, both were at least as old as the days of the Athenian stage, and the Athenian poets had lavished on the thought all the riches of their imagination. Now it is the shade of the dead Clytemnestra stirring up the sleeping Furies to their work, and heaping scorn upon the vengeance that slumbers.¹ Now there are the fearful forms of the Erinyes themselves, sometimes like sleuth-hounds scenting the blood and taking up the trail; sometimes like a mighty army pouring from their ambush, with the tramp of many feet, to execute their wrath—always embodiments of the nameless haunting which cannot be laid to rest till the guilt is purged away.² But in the central point the Greek treatment and the English are the same—the idea of the ever-wakeful spirit of the dead, the spirit that never forgets even where all things are forgotten, the vengeful ἀλάστωρ crying aloud for retribution on the murderers. And though it was considered matter for doubt how far earthly affairs touched or concerned the souls of the departed, yet the Greeks had no hesitation in picturing the spirits of the murdered as impatient for the great day of their vengeance, as invoked by, and giving aid to, those who were the true heirs of their quarrel.³ It was so even where, as in the *Choephoroi*, the murdered man is by no means drawn as a stainless hero, but as an erring mortal, though himself more grievously sinned against—exactly as Shakspeare depicts

¹ *Æsch. Eum.*, 94-116:—

“εὐδοῦτ’ ἄν, ὥν, καὶ καθυδουσῶν τί δαῖ; κ.τ.λ.”

² Compare for the imagery of hounds the end of the *Choephoroi* and the early part of the *Eumenides* of *Æschylus*; for that of the army, *Soph. Electra*, 489 sqq. —

“ἦξει καὶ πολύπους καὶ πολύχιρ ἃ δεινοῖς
κρυπτομένα λόχοις
χαλκόπους Ἑρινύς.”

³ Compare, *inter alia*, *Choeph.*, 456 sqq.

the murdered Hamlet. In a paper of such limited scope, and to a Society such as ours, detailed illustration would be superfluous, but one instance may be taken where the Greek and the Shaksperian treatment of the idea most nearly approach one another. It is where the ghost of Clytemnestra rises to urge on the ministers of its vengeance, the Furies who are slumbering "unmindful of their cause," when they should be up and doing. I venture to quote from a translation known to all Wykehamists—

"What do ye, sleeping here?
Be not o'ercome with toil, nor, sleep-subdued,
Be heedless of my wrong. Up! thrill your heart
With the just chidings of my tongue—such words
Are as a spur to purpose firmly held."¹

Under such imagery do two dramatists, separated by a gulf of two thousand years, represent the voice within that prompts and spurs to action till the time of retribution come.

When we turn from the supernatural in *Hamlet* to the Ghost-scene in *Macbeth*, I think the first thing that must strike even the most superficial observer is the magnificence of the acted *εἰσώVELα*. The banquet is prepared and the welcome given, when the murderer comes to the door with the victim's blood on his face. Thus re-assured of his fears, the King speaks—

"Here had we now our country's honour roofed,
Were the graced person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance."

But even with his first words the Ghost of Banquo enters and sits in Macbeth's place. Yet the King does not see him for the present, and goes on with the feigned words of longing and love for the living, while the spectre of the dead is there in his own seat, waiting for him to turn

¹ Morshead, *House of Atreus*, p. 142. *Eumenides*, 133 sqq.

and see the ghastly form of the man he knows he has murdered, from whom he thinks himself freed, and whose presence he feigns to miss. The suspense and horror in the story of Oedipus and Jocasta is but child's play to this. Nor is this all. The Ghost departs and the King is himself once more : he drinks to all present—

(And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss):
"Would he were here!"

and as the pledge is drunk the spectre comes again, as a visible answer to the lying wish—the dead man's spirit taking the murderer at his word. Again nothing in truth or fiction, in tragedy or real life, can equal the awful irony : terrible as Aeschylus often is, he has nothing so terrible as this.

Here, as before, the workmanship is perfect to the minutest detail. No one sees the vision but Macbeth, for this is a punishing ghost, and none there but Macbeth was privy to the crime : even from Lady Macbeth it is hidden : she was to be innocent of the knowledge till she should applaud the deed. Once more—even to Macbeth the Ghost says nothing, nor do its looks speak for it : it only glares with eyes that have no speculation in them, and shakes its gory locks. The punishment was greatest as it was : speech could do no more, but rather less : the silence of the spectre haunted Macbeth more than any words : had it spoken it would have been a positive relief.

This, then, is a ghost with a mission different to that which we have seen in the case of Hamlet. There, the natural avenger was confronted at once with the crime and with the spirit that calls for retribution ; here, the murderer is brought face to face with the vision of the murdered man, and is filled with a haunting terror. This is the first part of the Ghost's work. The criminal is unmanned and unnerved ; he forgets all caution ; his words are forced

from him by the ecstasy of horror ; his features writhe with fear. When the sight is gone and reason comes back, he realises what it means,—

“It will have blood : they say, blood will have blood.”

But he nerves himself even in his agony to go to the witches to learn more, and sees and speaks with the visions with the energy and courage of despair. But when at last Banquo's ghost follows the long line of future kings, the nerves are unstrung, the agony and horror return, and the man is haunted again.

This, then, is the first stage, chronologically, of the inward and mental punishment for crime. The criminal's mind is seized and haunted by the horrible memory of what he has done ; he cannot forget the man he has murdered. There are times when he pulls himself together and is himself again, but he is liable always to a new paroxysm : the least word, trifles light as air may bring it all back ; his suffering is greater than he can bear.

But it is not only thus to haunt him with the memory of the crime that the spectre comes : it has a more dreadful part still to play—it infatuates him and leads him on to further guilt. This is the most terrible and the most real part of the punishment—the inability ever to escape from the guilt, the ever-increasing tenacity with which it holds mind and body prisoners. Born of crime there is a recklessness, an infatuation ever urging on to fresh crime, ever trying to convince its victim that the horror which the earlier actions bring is simply the “initiate fear that wants hard use,” till at last, with Macbeth, he feels that he has gone so far that “returning were as tedious as go o'er.” Macbeth's first thought is to know the worst ; then he will stick at nothing for his own advantage. The truth known, he goes on with a recklessness which would surprise us were it not so real ; the firstlings of his heart are to be the firstlings of his

hand ; a whole household is to be given over to destruction for the fear of one. The deed he hopes will stay further hauntings : from them he shrinks still—"But no more sights."

Here, then, we have the second stage of the same disease we noticed before. Now the murderer has got rid of the haunting memories which convulsed and paralysed his nature ; he has cast out the evil spirit which came and tore him. But the dwelling cannot remain empty ; though the evil spirit be gone, it will return with seven-fold force and power ; it will now not merely haunt the mind, but drive it violently on to destruction—the last state will be worse than the first.

This idea, again, of one sin begetting another, and the line stretching out to the crack of doom, was familiar to the Greek mind in the word *ἄτη*—the goading power that drives man to his own destruction—and is as truly exemplified in *Macbeth* as ever in Homer, Aeschylus, or Sophocles. But there is one essential difference. Thoroughly as they grasped the idea, the Greek poets never got beyond the stage of personifying Ate *in words*—"Eldest daughter of Zeus is Ate, who blindeth all, a power of bane : delicate are her feet, for not upon earth she goeth, but walketh over the heads of men, making men to fall ; and entangleth this one or that."¹ She is "swift and strong, and goeth over the whole earth."² Again, "Insolence when old is wont to bear a youthful insolence the young one genders arrogance and that uncombated, unwarred, unholy fiend Audacity."³ Here the thought stands out as clearly—perhaps more so, because less disguised in imagery—as in Shakspeare. But the later poet goes further ; he not only makes concrete the abstract idea, but he actually

¹ *Il.*, xix, 91 *sqq.* (Myers' translation).

² *Il.*, ix, 505-6.

³ *Æsch. Agamemnon*, 763 *sqq.* (Dr. Kennedy's translation).

presents it to the eye. The *ἄτη* as well as the *ἀλάστωρ* come before us on the very stage, and fill us with an awe and horror which no mere abstraction could produce.

I am anxious particularly to insist on this, because it might otherwise be supposed that a comparison of the Banquo Ghost with the Greek Ate is a grievous error, losing sight altogether of the special power of this marvel of Shakspeare's creative genius. The Banquo Ghost is obviously no mere fancy of Macbeth's—no false creation of the brain like the air-drawn dagger before the murder—any more than the Hamlet Ghost is an ecstasy. It is coupled with and preceded by terrible dreams, which rack and torture the criminal nightly, as a fitting preparation for the more awful horrors to ensue. But it is emphatically not a vision as of the delirious drunkard, which goads him to crime; it is not the result of over-wrought nerves. It is an outward and sensible manifestation. (Macbeth has just been reassured as to Banquo; he is calm and self-possessed; he carries out the deception at the opening of the scene unshaken. The entire irony of the situation is lost if he is only *supposed* to see the spectre; and the contrast between his vacillation before and his recklessness after the crime—the two extremes of *ἀνδρεία*—is lost as well.) The Ghost is not seen by Lady Macbeth, who has never wavered, and who would not have wavered, at Banquo's removal; it appears only to the man on whom it can work, who can be spurred on by this means to fresh crime. If, then, the Ghost of Banquo partakes of the very essence of the Ate, in its outward and visible form it is as real as the Furies whom the Roman spectator saw as they drove the matricide across the stage—

“*Armatam facibus matrem et serpentibus atris
cum fugit*”¹—

as real to Macbeth as the Erinyes to Orestes when he cries,

¹ *Virg. Æn.* iv, 472.

"These are no visions born of my torments ; nay, without doubt, they are the sleuth-hounds of my mother's vengeance." ¹

I hope I have shown how in both these plays the supernatural is the very spring and centre of the dramatic action. There is no mere *deus ex machina*, descending at the end to disentangle the hopeless knots and surprise the audience with a successful *finale* ; no mere spectacular apparitions. In both cases there is something far deeper than that which appears on the surface—the presentation of mysterious ideas with which the interest of the tragedy is indissolubly connected, and from which, one might almost say, its main action springs. It is otherwise with the drama which we now reach. In *Julius Cæsar* there is no spirit spurring to revenge or luring to a deeper abyss of crime ; we have instead that presentiment of coming doom, which in things of minor importance and in a lesser degree is matter of common experience. Only, as before, it is the poet's art to represent it objectively, by an outward manifestation, in a visible shape.

The Ghost of Cæsar comes to Brutus twice : once at Sardis, after the quarrel with Cassius, when the beginning of the end is coming in sight ; again, at Philippi, the night before the battle. There is no anger nor terror in his coming, beyond the natural awe which the idea of the supernatural excites ; nothing in his appearance like blood-boltered Banquo with his gory locks ; nothing like the horrible story of the murdered Hamlet. And so Brutus in his turn, though at first with natural fear his blood is chilled and his hair stares, is only appalled for a moment—

"Ill spirit, I would hold more talk with thee"—

and when the Ghost appears the second time, he recognises

¹ *Æsch. Choeph.*, 1053.

the imminence of his doom with the calm of a Stoic—"I know my hour is come." The Ghost comes more in sorrow than in anger; he is a sign of death, but in no way the cause of it. (True, his second coming brings Brutus to despair, but the despair is calm and self-possessed, and the death would have come as it did without any ghost from the grave.) The only hint at any further influence is to be found in the exclamation wrung from Brutus at the sight of Cassius' and Titinius' bodies—

"O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!
Thy spirit walks abroad and turns our swords
In our own proper entrails."

But though this does suggest the idea of the avenging spirit, I do not think that idea is meant to be prominently brought forward. The Liberators kill themselves, not through remorse for what they have done, but in consequence of the hopelessness of their cause.

Again, it is not the deepest sinner nor the natural avenger that this spectre visits. (Brutus is the noblest Roman of them all; what he did he did from the highest motives) and his heart was wrung with the tortures of self-examination before the doing of it; his very state had been in insurrection. At the same time he was honoured and dear to Cæsar above them all: where the well-beloved Brutus stabbed, the blood of Cæsar followed the dagger withdrawn—

"to be resolved
If Brutus so unkindly knocked or no."

Here is the true reason why he alone is visited by the Ghost, and why it has so little outward effect upon him. (The others are more or less commonplace conspirators: Brutus has a pedestal to himself in the temple of Liberty.)

Such, then, are the thoughts which our author would express by the figures of popular superstition. They were not new; indeed, it is their very interest that they had

vexed and exercised the minds of poets and thinkers of all time. What we do claim for Shakspeare is that he carried the dramatic embodiment of them to a point which had not been reached before ; that, by using machinery with which the popular mind was familiar, he presented them in such a form as to appeal to the people and not only to the philosopher. Yet, however he popularises and reshapes, the thoughts suffer no loss of vigour or sharpness—nay, rather, their power is increased.

NOTE.—The Ghosts in *Richard III* and *Cymbeline*.—A word of explanation is necessary as to the reasons why the visions in these two plays have been excluded from the category of ghosts proper. As to their genuineness I say nothing, though very likely a strong case might be made out against them, both on the general evidence of style—misleading as it often is—and on the general disposition to foist in sensational matter for stage effect. It is sufficient for the present purpose to point out two things. In the first place, the ghosts in both plays are dreams ; they have no waking existence. Richard's "Methought the souls of all that I had murdered came to my tent," Posthumus' "Sleep thou hast been a grandsire," are very different from "As I live, I saw him," "My father, in his habit as he lived." And secondly, in both cases their appearances might be expunged from the play without plot or interest or dramatic action suffering in the slightest degree. Beyond this, the *Cymbeline* ghosts essentially differ from the rest in that, firstly, they are ghosts to cheer, not to appal ; while, secondly, in large part they are no ghosts, but simply an adaptation of the pagan mythology for miraculous purposes.

II.

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

Of all Shakspeare's creations, none better illustrate his freshness and charm than his Fairies. The three ghost-plays are evidence of his deeper and more matured thought ; the fairy-play is either a product or a reflection of the freshness of his youth, a reminiscence of the time before he came to the great city. Here, as before, we cannot with absolute certainty distinguish those ideas which Shakspeare received as a common tradition and those which are a

creation of his own. Nor—except so far as his creations are a symbolism of his thoughts—does it practically very much matter. However much he enlarged upon or refined the popular tradition, he still accepted it as one of the most effective ways of appealing to the people. In either case the ideas are a reflex of the age and its ways of thinking, and as such Shakspeare reproduces or creates them.

What to many will be the great charm of the Fairies is the way they live and move and have their being in the country. How long it was after Shakspeare came to London that he wrote his fairy story for us is, I imagine, impossible to discover ; for the date of publication tells us nothing. But we cannot doubt that as he wrote he felt the breath of the Warwickshire lanes and heard the babble of its clear streams, and remembered the country he had known as a boy—the country which, when the present writer first went to school, could show many a meeting-place for Oberon and Titania even within two miles of a manufacturing town. And so in the play there comes out before everything an intense love of the country, of its hills and dales, its paved fountain and its rushy brook ; and with the love, a knowledge of its beauties and an appreciation of its legends, coupled with a longing for them again—

“ O ubi campi
Spercheusque, et virginibus bacchata Lacaenis
Taygeta.”¹

Here, then, is the fairies' home. They roam the forests ; their meeting-places are meads and woods ; they sleep on banks of eglantine, and dance their mazes upon the green-sward ; the dewdrops are their jewels ; their food the honey ; the lights for their revels the waxen thighs of bees kindled at the glow worm's eyes ; their deadly foemen are the bats,

¹ Virg. *Georg.* ii, 486.

and they commit flat burglary upon the squirrel's hoard. To illustrate this in detail would be to tell the whole fairy story, for it comes out everywhere.

It is in close connection with this cardinal characteristic that their agency is seen in the powers and phenomena of Nature. The winds pipe to them ; but they have quarrelled, and there are broils where there should be sport ; they will not dance to the winds' piping. Hence comes all the evil that affronted Nature can send : fogs and floods, blight and murrain, change of seasons, summer frosts, and buds before their time ; the fairy quarrels have caused it all. Sometimes, again, their agency is more direct : like the children of the cloud, they "deal with the wind and the weather."¹ Puck overcasts the night and blots out the stars with the fog, just as Ariel raises and quells the storm and runs in the *ignis fatuus* over the masts and spars of the wrecked vessel.

Secondly—what at first seems a minor point—their littleness. Their very names are Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed. Their queen is all glorious in clothing of a snake's skin ; her fan is a butterfly's wing, to relieve the glare of the midnight moonbeam. Her servants are little elves, whose coats are of bats' wings, and their hiding-places the acorn cups. They war with cankers, and take their weapons to slay the bee, yet with the awful peril of being overwhelmed in his honey. Their enemies to do them harm are the hedgehog, the owl and the newt, the spider, the beetle and the worm ; the most venturesome, the *chevaliers sans peur*, the *braves des braves*, storm the squirrel's treasure-house. Every detail of this is filled in in the picture of Queen Mab. Herself no bigger than the

¹ Cf. Morris, *Sigurd the Volsung*, III, init. :—

"And now of the Niblung people the tale beginneth to tell,
How they deal with the wind and the weather," etc.

stone of a ring, she is drawn in a hollow hazel nut by little atomies, yoked with the moonshine and harnessed with traces of finest gossamer.¹ But this littleness gives them power. If to them time and space are not eliminated, they are at least reduced to their lowest possible terms. Titania's servants leave her to do their business—to carry on their wars and find their sustenance—for a third of a minute; in forty minutes Puck puts a girdle round about the earth; his fellow-spirit, Ariel, drinks the air and returns in a pulse-beat; every step will take them leagues. So they are of no place; distance is no object to them; over hill and dale, through flood and fire they go, swifter than the moon herself; they are wanderers always. Titania has gossiped with the votaress of her order amid the spiced Indian breezes, as she quarrels with Oberon in the pure air of Attica; her fairies will feed Bottom on honey of Hymettus, or fetch him jewels from the vasty deep. Oberon can steal away from Fairyland to make love to amorous Phillida; he can go to and fro between Athens and the furthest steppe of India; with his train of followers, he can compass the globe quicker than the wandering moon.

This leads us on to a third characteristic. They are not of the earth, earthy; but of the air, ethereal. They are shadows from the land of dreams and sleep, and Oberon, their monarch, is the shadows' king; yet they are pure, immortal, spiritual, and those whom they love they can make pure even as themselves; they can purge away their mortality and grossness.² But they are not seen of any common mortal; those who view them are the "votaresses" of their order, bound ever by their vows, or such as Bottom,

¹ *Romeo and Juliet*, I, iv, 53.

² *Midsummer Night's Dream*, III, i, 163:—

"And I will purge thy mortal grossness so
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go."

a mortal but "translated," brought into Fairyland for awhile, and beloved by its queen.

Here, then, they differ in essence from ghosts. They are spirits of another sort from the souls which have dwelt in dull and mortal bodies. Themselves they have nothing to do with mortality: the ghosts at least have had. They deal with men unseen and unheard: the ghosts manifest themselves to ear and eye. Fairies are not like the ghosts, the wakeful wanderers of the night, because they are exiled or self-banished from the day. The night is often Titania's time of rest; Oberon has often waited to make sport with the morning's love, and dallied in the groves till the sun has gone forth from his gate of crimson and turned the green ocean into gold. Still, though it be an accident, the darkness as a rule is their season: fairy time and ghost time are the same: like the ghosts they come at dead of night, and at the first light they trip after its shade, running from the sun's presence and following darkness like a dream.

Further, they have magic and powers flowing from their special characteristics, of which the ghosts can know nothing. They have a wondrous herb, their Love-indulgence, which, like Comus' cup, can enthrall the soul and bind it fast in chains of error; and yet another, which can, as Moly or Haemony, shatter the enchantment and illusion, purge away the false and wrong, and lead on to the truth.¹ More, their power is both for ill and good; but if it be for ill, it is only that good may come, and is but seldom exercised. Generally speaking, they are the spirits of blessing, not of cursing. Where they dance, the ground rocks the weary

¹ Milton, *Comus*, 636:—

"And yet more medicinal is it than that Moly
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave,
He called it Haemony," etc.

And compare *Odyssey*, x, 305.

into slumber sweet and the house is blessed to all prosperity ; they give peace and safety, fair issue and long days of happiness.

Such then is the little world which Shakspeare creates for us in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Like this work-a-day world, it has inhabitants of varying ranks and manifold degrees of power. There is Oberon the king, and Titania the queen, each with a train of attendant courtiers and a body-guard of warrior elves ; the king has his chief agent and minister ; the queen has the daughters of her people to tend her and do her service. As in an ordered commonwealth, they are sent out in bands ; some, the workers, for food and clothing ; others, the warriors, to ward off and confound the enemy.¹ And as their ranks and business vary, so also do their powers : some have a higher art and magic than the rest. Oberon could see Cupid between moon and earth launch a shaft from his bow at the vestal of the west ; but the sight was hidden from Puck's duller vision ; the elves tremble and flee for fear when Oberon and Titania show their anger and join the fray.

In this little world the central figure and type of the whole is Puck ; but he is nevertheless marked off from the others by well-defined characteristics. His very essence is mischief ; he is the mad spirit ; he sketches his own character as one who delights in that above all things—

“ And those things do best please me
Which befall preposterously.”

Sometimes he is playing tricks among the villagery. When he is there, the goodwife toils in vain with her churn, and brew they never so wisely, the drink will bear no barm ; or else, by counterfeiting a stool, he makes the aged crones

¹ Compare with this, *inter alia*, the description of the bees in *Henry V*, I, ii, 190.

to sit down upon empty air. Sometimes he misleads those who journey by night, and laughs at their bootless wandering ; he leads the Quince company a dance through the forest, through bush and brier, moor and fen, in the likeness of beasts and strange monsters ; he mocks the warlike Demetrius and Lysander till they drop for weariness at pursuing the imagined foe. The success of his trick upon Bottom is a glorious delight ; the mistakes of Helena and Lysander, though the fruit of sheer mischance, are wondrous sport. In true modern Parliamentary fashion, while he apologises for his fault, he glories in the mischief it has bred—

“ And so far am I glad it so did sort,
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.”

But in the midst of the mischief there is mirth. It is no malicious wickedness, no ill-tempered practical joke ; with it all there is the height of “ Good-fellowship ”¹ and laughter holding both his sides. And so Puck is not only the prime minister, but the court jester of Fairyland and its monarchs. He is the merry wanderer of the night ; he jests to Oberon and makes him smile ; he misleads his victims with a laugh ; and the old wives’ circle which he throws into confusion is at the same moment stirred to a more boisterous mirth. And so it is with the joyousness of a boy that he plays his tricks, not with the sullenness of a misanthrope ; and like a boyish joke they do no enduring harm—they last but for a moment, and vanish away in laughter.

In these two respects he stands by himself as a separate figure in Fairyland. For the rest, he is a fairy of the fairies, with all their qualities and a Pharisaic exclusiveness besides—

“ Lord, what fools these mortals be.”

¹ Puck is both by name and nature “ Robin Goodfellow.” Cf. *M. N. D.*, ii, 1-34.

Readers of Mr. Besant's *Dorothy Forster* may remember how that lady, while priding herself on the great blessing which they of the North Country enjoy in the shape of visits and messages from the dead, cannot understand the purpose served in the Great Universal Scheme by the race of fairies. We may reasonably ask ourselves what purpose they serve in the scheme of Shakspeare, why he employs them, and what they symbolise. Why he employs them I hope has been shown already : what they symbolise is to be answered out of his own mouth—from the name of his fairy play—a Dream.

They are intimately bound up with dreams, and Fairyland is in essence Dreamland. Queen Mab is the impersonification—so far as any such can be created—of the influences that work upon the sleeper and of the thoughts, if we may so call them, that course through his brain, that free him from this mortal coil and lift him up into another being. It is a being where the dreamer finds the littleness of Fairyland ; where time and space are reduced almost to nothing ; where vast events take shape and come and go in a moment ; in which the sleeper is where he would be in the twinkling of an eye, and finds all his heart's desire. There, as in Fairyland, are strength and power, beauty and painlessness, ever freshness and ever charm, as a stream of water to a wayfarer in a thirsty land :—

“ὁδοιπόρῳ διψῶντι πηγᾶιν ῥέος.”¹

There, as in Fairyland, everything is of air—thin air, and vanishes into that from which it came. We might even find a further analogy, and ask whether it is not to the few “votaresses” alone, to the few “translated,” that there is any more substance in dreams than Lysander and Demetrius found in the voice that mocked them ; whether

¹ *Æsch. Agam.*, 901.

to other than the few favoured ones is more granted than to hear a far-off echo which has no material existence or power ; whether more than a very few find there any reality or consummation, even as Bottom and Titania's votaress alone saw the fairies face to face. It may be that this resemblance is not intentional ; but it may be true nevertheless.

That this is what the fairies symbolise is obvious, not only from the title of the Fairy play, but also from the words of its characters. Like dreams, the Fairies dance attendance on Night's vanishing car ; hardly ever do they push on into the day ; never do they come before dead midnight ; but as the chariot of the night rolls on towards morning, they follow always in its track. They never tarry till it has passed far from any spot, or till the horses of Aurora come in its place. Add to this the idea already noticed—that they are shadows—and we can grasp the whole conception. They are Shadows, dwelling in the shadowy borderland between the realms of Night and Day, ruling over the dream-sleep of men—the sleep that is deepest before the awakening, when the morning comes and the shadows flee away, unknown and unremembered, “on wings that follow the ways of sleep” :—

“ βέβακεν ὄψις οὐ μεθύτερον
πτεροῖς ὁπαδοῖς ὕπνου κελεύθοις.”¹

How absolutely their functions coincide with the part played by dreams in our life must be obvious to every dreamer. The speed, the imagination, the idealisation of the Fairies, all have their archetype in a dream ; but more than all, the resemblance can be traced in what may be called their momentary character. I allude to the well-known theory, borne out by so much experience, that

¹ *Æsch. Agam.*, 425-6.

in most cases dreams, however long and involved they may seem to be, do really come and go in an instant—the instant before awakening. All their thoughts and feelings and actions are in that instant impressed on the brain, just as in a fraction of a second we may get a picture with brightness and shadow and detail by the flash of light through a lens. This is in essence the symbolism of the Fairies—their movements quicker than the moon—their attendance upon night as she vanishes into morning—the forgetfulness of those whom they visit as soon as they are passed away.

And here we might leave Fairyland, but that it seems needful to say one word as to the relation in which its people stand to “spirits of another sort”—the spirits of the *Tempest*. Here we have a complete change of scene. We are now in an enchanted isle, the kingdom of a mortal magician, a bookworm, an astrologer, a necromancer. He holds sway over the spirits who dwell therein ; they are his instruments to do his work and execute his vengeance. The only human beings on the island except himself are his daughter and a monster, the son of a witch ; and they are so little acquainted with men, or any living thing but spirits, that for spirits they take the shipwrecked crew from Italy. The place itself is full of strange noises—music that draws the listener as it creeps over the lulled waters, and has knowledge of what, save by superhuman means, would be beyond its ken—“sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not”—voices that mock the speech of others—voices, again, that charm into sleep wherein the sleeper has dreams of riches and blessings beyond all imagining. The sounds are denied to none ; all hear them alike—the good and bad, the faithful friend and the traitor, the jester and the drunkard, the prince and the monster.

And there are wonderful sights as well as sounds—goddesses, nymphs, and reapers, banquets served by strange shapes, hunters and hounds, dogs and harpies. Yet the actors are spirits which vanish into thin air, the pageant is unsubstantial, the fabric of the vision baseless. There are mysterious agencies, too, dealing evils unseen but not unfelt—sudden agues, convulsions, and cramps, blows and pinches from invisible hands. It is a land of spells and charms. Those who are brought under their influence are rooted to the ground where they stand ; their arms are unnerved ; they are cast into a trance from which there is no awakening save by the aid of the self-same magic.

If we compare this with the fairy play, three things must especially strike us—its imaginativeness, its greater artificiality, and dependence upon stage effect. It is less natural, in its mode of treatment less connected with or drawn from popular ideas, more elaborated, more meta-physical and introspective, more complex, and more matured. It combines the artistic elaboration of a masque with the half attractive, half repellent, mystery of the black art. Its nymphs and reapers would have delighted the polite world in the Inns of Court ; its Prospero would have been courted by the learned and superstitious : but he would undoubtedly have been immersed in a horsepond by the vulgar mob. Its spirits are not nearly so much a part of the common belief as are the Ghosts and the Fairies ; and the point of view from which it approaches the supernatural is by no means that which might be called popular. In reality, therefore, it lies outside the scope of this paper. But it may help us, perhaps, to mark the character of the Fairies more clearly if we enter into a very brief comparison, and try to see in what relation they stand to the inhabitants of the Enchanted Isle.

Of the points of resemblance, first, the most obvious

is the popular power of the Fairies to present strange shapes, to produce strange sounds, and to exercise a beneficent or, though far more rarely, a malignant power. As Puck changes into "horse, hound, hog, bear, fire," so Ariel becomes a nymph of the sea or a harpy ; as Puck taunts Demetrius and Lysander, himself unseen, so Ariel, invisible, draws on Ferdinand by magic music, or embroils Stephano and Trinculo by interruptions ; as the one leads Quince and his company a dance through the wood, so the other entices the drunkards into the filthy-mantled pool. But there is this essential difference : Puck, even when obeying orders, is possessed simply with the spirit of mischief ; Ariel is, in however small a way, the minister of a serious purpose and a righteous requital. The travellers are first wrecked, then saved, unscathed of the sea, and dispersed through the isle ; the ship is hidden away, its sailors, under hatches, soothed with a charm. The actions are more in accordance with orders, and display, perhaps, less spontaneousness or individuality ; but they are on a higher level than those of the goblin.

Again, the supernatural characters of the two plays have a point of union in their spirituality. With a touch of Puck's aristocratic exclusiveness, Ariel had refused the commands of the witch Sycorax as too earthy for a thing so ethereal. This "airy spirit," the type of Prospero's subjects, like Puck, annihilates Time and Space—

" I drink the air before me and return,
Or ere your pulse twice beat"—

is invisible, and now comes, now goes ; is invulnerable as air. But here, again, is the same difference we noted before. These supra-human powers are controlled by a mortal master, exercised not of free will, but in strict obedience to orders. The spirit is correspondent to command.

Thirdly, like the Fairies, the spirits of the *Tempest* are connected closely with nature and with natural phenomena. Ariel will fly, running on the sharp wind of the north, or swim and tread the ooze of the salt deep; able alike to dive into the fire, to ride on the curled clouds, or do the master's business in the veins of the frozen earth. By the same agency the tempest is raised, the *ignis fatuus* plays over the doomed ship, the vessel is filled with inexpressible horror; Ferdinand cries aloud that hell is empty and all the devils are there. Such spirits are the ministers of whose aid Prospero stands in need, to exercise his dominion over natural forces; by their means the sun is dimmed at noonday, the winds are called forth, and the elemental war is set a-raging; the earth quakes, and the trees are uprooted; nay, even the graves awake their sleepers, and let them out.

It is here specially to be remarked how inter-dependent are these spirits and Prospero. They are absolutely necessary to him for his dominion over nature, and his art tells him how to gain their aid; but of their own selves, unless thus set in motion by a master mind, apparently they are powerless. And thus we are led to our first point of contrast—the lack of spontaneity in the actions of the typical spirit as compared with those of the typical fairy. The essential characteristic of these spirits of the *Tempest* is that their powers are controlled and used by a mortal. Ariel is, and has always been, a servant—now of Prospero, formerly of the witch Sycorax: and so with all of them, enthralled, sometimes in strange shapes and with strange sounds, to do their master's bidding—instruments of punishment and spirits of revenge. Freedom does not come till the action of the play is over: and of the spirits in their free state we are told nothing. And so we find that in the play Ariel never takes the initiative in anything;

there is no spontaneity of action except to work out in an inimitably airy way Prospero's general order ; and all the spirits are " ministers of fate."

It is only in keeping with this that in the *Tempest* there should be a fuller use of material aids and instruments. The spirits who are under the power of a mortal are so enthralled only because that mortal possesses a superior and extraordinary knowledge, which finds at once its symbolism and its means of operation in such things as magic rods and mantles. In fact we have the whole traditional apparatus of the necromancer—the solitary place, the charmed circle, the staff, the book, the company of attendant and usually obedient spirits.¹ And these are absolute essentials. The books are prized by Prospero above his dukedom : he must to them whenever business impends : without them, as even Caliban is aware, he has not one spirit to command.

And in a third way they are more controlled than their fellows the fairies—I mean in point of place. True, they are able to go anywhere to do their master's bidding ; but they do not wander at will, as the fairies do, after the chariot of night, or traverse the globe between sunset and sunrise. They must be always at Prospero's beck and call, and their home is this desert island, where first he found them. Here they are enthralled till such time as by his power he lets them go free to the elements. It would indeed seem that in this idea of locality, again, Shakspeare has prominently before his mind the "black art" of necromancy, and that the spirits are introduced really as part and parcel of the necromancer's stock-in-trade. Ariel and the others hold a far more subordinate position and have far less influence on plot and action than the Fairies :

¹ Compare, for instance, the account in *John Inglesant* of the wizard in Lambeth Marshes, or of Mr. Bastable, in Besant and Rice's *This Son of Vulcan*.

we can more easily imagine the *Tempest* without the *personality* of Ariel than the *Midsummer Night's Dream* without that of Titania and Oberon and Puck.

Finally, the spirits have a characteristic which is reflected more or less throughout the play—that of sexlessness. It is worthy of notice that throughout the *Tempest*—I speak at the moment from memory—not only is no mention made, but no hint is so much as given, of the sex of Ariel. And, to my mind, this is fully borne out by the way in which the whole character is drawn. There is a lack of anything decisive, definite, or vigorous : we feel the charm of the airy spirit without being able to say precisely wherein it consists, with a consciousness at the same time that the character, however graceful, does not appeal to human sympathies in the same way as the fairies—however dreamy they be,—in the same way as the loves and quarrels of Oberon and Titania, or the mischievous merriment of Puck. And the same idea is forced upon us at the opening of the play—the thought that the old magician and bookworm has half buried his human feelings in his art, while in his daughter they have not yet been awakened. She knows nothing but her father, Caliban, and the spirits ; and she thinks all else must be as little human as they. It is the awakening of these feelings which gives the true interest to the *Tempest* ; for, in truth, the play is throughout a conflict of forces, and not a fairy play at all ; and as the human in it prevails over the non-human, the supernatural element which was first employed as an instrument finally vanishes altogether. How unlike the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, where the Fairies reserve their fullest blessings to the end, and the last sounds that ring in our ears are the echoes of the voice of Puck.

O. T. PERKINS.

SHAKESPEARE'S
VIEW OF WOMEN'S RELATIONS WITH AND
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IT is a curious fact that, in spite of the distinguished positions which women have from time to time occupied on the world's stage, no certain or satisfactory estimate of their position has yet been made. The parts they have played in the history of mankind have been so conspicuous that it might have been supposed that they would have attracted the attention of the thoughtful to this point and have enabled them to come to a conclusion upon it. And the effect, and it may be the advantage, of this uncertainty has been an increased activity of late in certain minds, male and female, in the effort of settling certainly the doubtful question. Their methods have been direct, and they have avoided the difficulties of an exact and precise answer by claiming the perfect equality, as of worth so of position, of man and woman. To deny so large an assertion point blank would be worse than unfair, it would be unchivalrous. Nor do we wish to contest, nor does Shakespeare justify us in contesting, a very probable and a very agreeable truth. But equality in this context would certainly seem a word full of the rosiest promise. The belief in woman's equal worth with man ought exactly to double our confidence in the chances of the victory of truth and right : where one

before has striven two would then strive. For the machinery for this admirable end is ready at hand. There is no need to ask how this being, at length appreciated, would have full scope for the play of her faculties, and for the exercise of her influence within the framework of civilization: there need be no fear that it would be impossible to work this new piece into the mosaic, wrought in a darkness which prevented the appreciation of its fitness. Since man and woman almost invariably unite closely and permanently in face of the tasks of life, equality would mean co-operation. Man would no longer seek for a more or less acquiescent companion, but for an enlightened co-operator and adviser, and the close unions of men and women would be materially altered at once in their nature and their effects. How, if woman be a creation as pre-eminent morally and intellectually as man, can it be but that the association, which before may have rested and was dependent upon perhaps nothing higher than satisfied sense, would now be the union formed for the noble execution of noble schemes?

But does this happen? And if not, why not? Do women ignore the splendid opportunities which the various forms of union with man present to help great spirits to renovate the world? And if so, why so? Or do women exercise, for instance, on men of mark—for we will so limit the scope of our enquiry—an influence such as would be looked for from an equally gifted creation? Do they attempt to do so?

It is a wise course in searching for an answer to any human problem to find out Shakespeare's view thereon.

As has been stated, it demands an explanation if, on the one hand, women are, on the whole, worthy to take up the burden which men, on the whole, certainly support, of a life's work in the cause of humanity; and if, on the other, they did not use the obvious means of union with man for

the performance of that task. What then is the truth on this point which Shakespeare reveals?

There are three striking instances in his dramatic works of a woman possessing a great influence over a distinguished man. First of all there is the instance to be found in the relations of Cleopatra and Antony. In that tragic story Shakespeare has depicted, with an amazing insight into human nature, a drama which is probably being acted, and will probably as long as the world lasts be acted over and over again, on the stage of life. For our immediate purpose the interest and point of the story is its exhibition of passion uninfluenced by any other sentiment or sense. For here is a problem of the first importance:—What is the result when passion, which is invariably a powerful factor in drawing man and woman together, is the only motive, the only pledge of union? Upon a man from whom his generation expects great things, who by his position and his powers has the opportunity of doing good to mankind, what is the effect of a union riveted merely by sense? It is because we find a vivid answer to this question that the play is of such permanent interest. Now we have no intention of discussing minutely the different developments of human vice which the concession to sense as the arbiter of affection naturally entail. There will not even be an attempt here to imitate the methods of the novelist of to-day. But we get a very clear view in this play of the scorching scorn which Shakespeare felt for the mortals—the beings whose soul, whether they like it or no, is immortal—who spoil life by yielding to sense. We are not considering—the play does not consider—the men who, with an immeasurable arrogance that almost justifies the most extravagant devotee of women's rights, use women as play-things sufficient for a leisure hour: we have rather to do with that class, if weaker at least less selfish, who lay a

genuine and particular devotion at a woman's feet, which yet originated unconsciously in, and is perpetuated alone by, sense. The former have not even advanced as far as the latter. It is usual to call such men as Antony weak in contrast to those who look to women for the satisfaction of sense, but do not permit them to spoil success. And this is true if an advance towards the light is weakness. Antony was not selfish enough to treat the "Gipsy Queen" merely as a means of recreation: he could not look upon her as something altogether outside of his life's work, neglect her when he had to work, and only seek her when he wished to sport. His passion was too absorbing to let him be either selfish or indolent. There was no toil from which he shrank which could please or gratify the passionate Queen who had bewitched him. Yet it is certain that this burning devotion was dependent upon, if not merely the physical charms of Cleopatra, at least the combined witchery of her ways and the comeliness of her person. The difference is small: with most people the form is merely the material expression of the mind: but when the form is pre-eminently beautiful the process is reversed, the mind becomes its obedient servant, and works only to throw its beauty into greater relief, to attract to it more numerous slaves. How should Antony suspect the origin and condition of his devotion? He had never asked himself what sort of soul his mistress had, or whether, when her beauty should decay, and the mind long used to serve it should slumber unused, and without occupation, she would still seem the only being with whom to live made earth seem heaven. Nevertheless, for the moment, while her beauty endured, his love was as intense, his devotion as absolute, as that of two souls linked eternally in mutual agreement.

The study of Antony should make people talk a little less confidently of the unselfishness of love, of the devotion

which it inspires, of the surrender of self which it entails. Love is one of those wide words behind which depraved society is fond of sheltering itself—just as their more respectable brethren hope to cover their godlessness under a broad system of religion. It is not the less a crime because it often entails a man's complete self-abandonment.

Let us consider to whom Antony was thus unselfishly devoted. Very little good can be said of Cleopatra, who uses her powers of witchery, not as some great ones have done to spur her captive to deeds worthy of himself, but with the restless energy of an insatiable passion to discover at each moment some new way to force him by word or action to declare his unaltered and unalterable devotion to herself. Woman's evanescent charms are meant to try a toiling world of spirits made to soar ; but even the good which sometimes comes out of the evil of surrender to this trial, even the energy of ambition, is not to be found in this case. Cleopatra knows that she is made to captivate and subdue, but she is so entirely animal that she does not turn her success to advantage ; she will not use her dominion over her captive for his good—she has only trapped him to satisfy her sense and pride. Whether he lose popularity, or fame, or Rome, or the world, it is all indifferent to her, so long as she can say "He is mine."

And what is the result ? Antony's skill is deteriorated, and his energy is slackened by the passion of his life ; while Cleopatra, having for her satisfaction let Antony idle away at her side precious moments, cannot even be faithful in the hour of danger. Hence come recriminations, and Antony seems estranged, and slipping from her grasp. It does not want more to rouse Cleopatra to a desperate effort to retrieve dominion over the wronged and ruined man. Careless of his sufferings she again plays upon his weak heart ; she has him told that she is dead. But she has

gone too far. On Antony, wrecked and desperate, the blow falls too hard ; habitual concession to sense has weakened his will and made a coward of even a Roman hero. The news that his goddess, whom in spite of faults he cannot choose but adore, has died from sympathy with his grief, make all the former flood of devotion well up again and choke his sense.

"I will o'ertake thee, Cleopatra, and
Weep for my pardon."

And he ends his life.

This is the first instance which Shakespeare puts before us of a woman's influence over a great man.

The next instance is of a different kind : here the woman has not been sought for by him whose life will be largely determined by her great influence. It is the picture of a mother and son : it will be admitted the responsibility on the son of having such a mother is very small. The story will not be the less interesting as a study of a woman's influence in directing a great man through the difficulties which the service of the state entail.

Coriolanus is a striking portrait of a great-hearted soldier : he is evidently above the pettiness of politicians who flatter as their rulers the mob from among whom it is their chief honour to stand out superior : on the other hand he is not one of those generous statesmen whose great aim is to serve the state and, if possible, to secure the assent and applause of the whole people in the fulfilment of their task. And as the play opens matters are obviously approaching a crisis which will test him sharply. His ideas will prevent him from yielding, so he will have to fight out the coming storm of popular disfavour. Who are the persons upon whose counsel he relies to indicate a course of action and to whose sympathy he looks to mitigate depressing failure ? We are soon introduced to them.

Much acute psychology is expended in the portrayal of Volumnia and Vergilia. The broad lines of their very widely-differing characters can easily be traced. The mother has none of those shrinkings from the perils of strenuous valour which youthful consorts affect or fail to conceal. In Vergilia they exist in an exaggerated degree. Thus when Volumnia waxes eloquent over the thought of her son flaying the enemy, Vergilia cries, "O Jupiter, no blood!" and the conversation generally leads us to expect that it is from his mother more than from his wife that Coriolanus will have to look for adequate advice.

Let us follow for a moment Coriolanus' career, with reference to the influence his women had on it. The problem which confronted him was how far he should modify the stiff independence of his character in order to manage the people, and what concessions he should make to their sensibilities. We see at once that the home influence would not probably tend towards the appreciation of the truth on this point. His mother's estimate of him prevents her from being the mediator between him and the discontented crowd. She is so entirely wrapped up in the masterful superiority of her hero, that she altogether fails to grasp that element of truth which the popular complaints contained.

The mother could not estimate her great son impartially: she found it difficult to detect in him the defects, or at least the dangerous exaggerations which greatness almost always implies. Her constant pre-occupation was his greatness; upon it she loves to dwell, for it is a comfortable thought that she is responsible for the existence of such a son and citizen. Thus it is that, being certain of his superiority, she draws the natural inference that where he and public opinion collide, he must be right and public opinion wrong. This fixed idea limits very seriously her capacity for counsel.

We can readily imagine that much of Coriolanus' superb disdainfulness arises from the constant nourishment which his mother gave to his sense of superiority. But she will soon have reason to regret this. Even on his return from Corioli, had she not been so entirely pre-occupied with her pride in him, she could not have failed to notice the dark looks and discontented mutterings with which the representatives of the people greeted him. And yet the moment was most opportune for the exercise of her influence. How useful would it have been for her son, had she hinted to him, on the strength of cool observations, that if he were to continue leader of the state he must use diplomacy in the exercise of his power. Perhaps she alone could have successfully pointed out to him that, if his heroic acts had been done, not for personal aggrandisement, but for the safety of the state—and any other supposition would rob them of their heroism,—it was incumbent on him to continue these patriotic efforts in the period of peace and from the distinguished position which his great deeds had won and assured. But no. Volumnia, clever and shrewd as she was, was content to increase rather than diminish his stupid scorn of the people, and to call them—

“Woollen vassals, things created
To buy and sell with groats, to show bare heads
In congregations, to yawn, be still and wonder,
When one but of our ordinance stood up
To speak of peace and war.”

Naturally, with such opinions imbibed, a man, however heroic, can find no place within the framework of a constitution which had admitted to a large share in government the lower orders.

Coriolanus felt it beneath him to ask his fellow citizens for their approval of his election to high office ; and, compelled by custom to do so, he had not concealed his opinion.

A disturbance ensues : popular opinion is roused to shake off this intolerable aristocrat, and the storm threatens to overwhelm the hero of Corioli. Volumnia, among the first, sees the danger. Her feminine facility of inference leads her at once to conclude that if her son is to succeed he must yield. Her ambition makes her now hold of very little moment the very doctrines which she herself has inculcated. With feminine agility she becomes at once the most plausible opportunist. But Coriolanus is too truly her son to be apt to learn lessons so contrary to her habitual teaching ; he does indeed make an effort to conciliate, but the ungovernable temper which his mother had so sedulously fostered, prevents the attempt succeeding, and he is compelled to leave Rome,—“the beast with many heads butts him away.”

At the moment of his exile the demeanour of the two women whom fate has set to be his consolers and counsellors is suggestively feminine. Volumnia, maddened by defeated ambition, hurls imprecations at her city. Vergilia, more piously, but with no more effect cries, “O heavens ! O heavens !” and Coriolanus, finding no comfort or consolation there, turns on her with—“Nay, I prithee, woman.” Yet he ought not to have expected that his “gracious silence” would effectually help him through any of life’s crises. And so, his constancy unsupported by his women, almost imperilled by their complaints, he goes forth—a great man supporting grandly a great blow. The women—for even Vergilia has caught something of her mother-in-law’s spirit—shriek abuse on the party who have driven Coriolanus away—a proceeding not very dignified and entirely ineffectual ; but, as Volumnia says, “it unclogs the heart of what lies heavy on it,” and to this feminine necessity she yields. However, though a woman, she is a great one ; her influence over Coriolanus is immense, and if hitherto she

has not always used it for the best, if till now she has let her womanly pride warp her sound judgment, a moment approaches when, like a true woman, she will see clearly the point to be gained, and to that end will employ a persuasion so masterly that no man can do otherwise than yield to it. It is the contest between Rome and Coriolanus: the latter has his city in his power, and revenge prompts him to crush her absolutely. The crisis stirs Volumnia's whole being. To see Rome conquered—her streets thronged by the successful soldiery of an hereditary foe, and that through the splendid achievements of her own son: the thought is too horrible. Coriolanus' success is worthless in her eyes, unless it be that of a Roman in the cause of Rome. Certain, then, of the dishonour which threatens her as a Roman and a mother, she is roused to put forth all her powers to avert it. The scene is dramatic: a mother imploring her powerful son to forgive a great wrong; a woman using to the full all the persuasiveness of her sex, all the methods of advocacy which her sensitive instinct suggests.

In truth, no one but a woman could have done the work so well. It is to his chivalry that she first appeals; she wishes to soften him in a way which he could not resent or suspect to be weakening to his resolution: Vergilia and Volumnia kneel before him. Then his pity is sought to be awakened by a description of his wife's and mother's woe—they are "more unfortunate than all living women," they "weep and shake with fear and sorrow"—"We must lose," she cries, "our country, our dear nurse, or else thy person, our comfort in the country." Nor does she stop here: strong in the certitude of his love for them, she declares that if he resolve on Rome's ruin he shall only enter the city over her corpse. Her arguments have already touched him; he rises, and would wish to cut short the

pleading of an advocate so skilled in probing his tenderest parts. But she has only begun her task: she has put him on the horns of a dilemma—either he must forego his revenge and disappoint the Volces, or he must, in taking Rome, slay his mother; from which difficulty she offers him this attractive exit: let Coriolanus be the mediator between the enemy and the city, and “each in either side” will “give the all hail to thee and cry, ‘Be blest for making up this peace!’” Still, however, the wronged man is silent, and Volumnia bursts out passionately—whether simulated or no the passion is either way effective—against his unmoved composure while his mother pleads—

“Thou hast never in thy life
Showed thy poor mother any courtesy.”

Still the victory is not won, and Volumnia, almost at the end of her resources, falls abjectly before him and utters one more prayer. Still no answer. She rises to go, but before she turns she puts upon him the last severest test: she begs to say good-bye, and clasps his hand. She has won the day: the touch of the trembling hand of a mother, who only loves too much, melts the stern soldier. No man, indeed, could resist such pleading, and the woman has conquered by her womanhood. This is the second picture which Shakespeare has drawn of the influence of a woman on a man of mark. The third is perhaps the most striking of the three.

Like Coriolanus, Macbeth, bent on an errand of difficulty and danger, had a woman at his side, whose ability and energy enabled her to throw herself heart and soul into his struggle, and share his ambitions. He is to be complimented on having found out so excellent a colleague. Here, at least, is sympathy and mutual help; here, at any rate, we have a rational union; here we find two persons with the same aims, who have married for the better

furtherance of the same ; here are the deficiencies of the one supplied by the qualities of the other ; here the man's skill in arms and in diplomatic address is supplemented by the woman's stern resoluteness and her superb indifference to means.

Possessed of a great ambition, Macbeth was not without the resoluteness necessary to carry out his schemes. Nor in the particular ambition of possessing the crown did he let an unexplored chasm lie between his desires and their object. It is plain from his letter to Lady Macbeth that immediately on hearing the witches' prophecy his mind spanned the distance by a foul deed : "Lay it [this predicted greatness] to thy heart," he wrote to his wife ; and this dark hint is further developed when, in answer to his wife's question as to the length of Duncan's stay beneath their roof, he says : "To-morrow—as he purposes." And to show clearly that the thoughts of both were working in the same direction, he merely meets Lady Macbeth's outspoken declaration of the necessity of the murder by—"We will speak further."

It is not the least true to say that Lady Macbeth drove an innocent and weak husband to commit, for her own aggrandisement, a horrible crime ; that idea and the stress laid upon it confuse the really important point. Macbeth, just as much as his wife, cherishes the thought of murder ; only he has scruples ; he foresees remorse, and he is afraid of it ; he feels grateful, too, to Duncan for his recent honours. Neither he nor his wife hate Duncan ; but they both see that he blocks the way of their success, and they both conclude that murdering him would clear it ; the only difference is that with the man there is some feeling of regret at the act, not as being a crime, but as being shabby and ungrateful, and much imaginative picturing how unpleasant its reminiscence will be. The woman is

above these considerations, and argues her husband into her view.

The deed is done, and Macbeth, sick at an act so mean, refuses to take the precautions which would mislead suspicion. The wife is at hand and supplies his lack of nerve. The crime has effected its object, and the two go forth hand in hand to perform the duties of an exalted station, and in the exercise of power to forget the grim spectres of remorse and retribution which dog their footsteps.

And the really attractive element in this dire association is the complete self-forgetfulness of Lady Macbeth. Just as her chief ambition had been to see the crown on her husband's brow, so her chief task is to assist him in supporting its burden. This obliteration of self on the part of a great woman, this sinking of her personality in her husband so that they two become one soul, is magnificent : perhaps it is woman's highest ideal.

Alone the life would have been intolerable ; for, as ever, one great crime leads to another, and the hands once stained turn readily to violence as the best way of overcoming every obstacle. But his wife stands faithfully by Macbeth : to her he can relieve his burdened soul by telling her all his thoughts : with her he can take counsel as to the necessity of Banquo's death : on her he can rely to obliterate the effect on his guests of his access of terror which the news of Banquo's death causes : it is she who puts him, tossed and tormented by the visions of his victims, to sleep. But soon the careful ministrations on her husband, in addition to her own remorse, puts too severe a strain upon her strength, and she falls sick. It is a moment when Macbeth can ill spare his loving counsellor, for the storm begins to growl over his palace. And at the moment when Malcolm and Macduff surround him with their armies,

Lady Macbeth dies. Without her, Macbeth, desperate and doomed, goes out to meet his fate.

The effort has been great : husband and wife, in perfect reliance upon each other, have laboured to grasp a coveted prize : the means by which they alone succeeded, carried with them their own retribution. And though it was by their combination and co-operation that the crime was committed, the responsibility for it cannot be shared. In the end each must bear its full weight : what has been done with another must be answered for alone.

We have examined the three instances where women exercise a conspicuous influence over men called to perform great acts. In each of these cases intimate sympathy existed. What influence has a woman's presence on the life of a man, when, as they do not really know one another, there is no sympathy between them? In the story of *Othello* we shall find some answer to this question.

Their ignorance of one another cuts short the honeymoon of Othello and Desdemona. The beauty of the picture makes us wish to linger over the short period of happiness : it makes us feel how cruel, though it cannot conceal how inevitable, was the fate of the lovers. Desdemona is charming, and she is often to be met with. She falls in love so unreservedly with Othello, because he recounts to her his manly exploits. It does not appear that his person was attractive, or that he went out of his way to make himself agreeable to her. But she, being a woman, felt the charm of something strong, panted to join herself in close connection with the strength, and resolved to be the devoted helpmate of her hero. There is nothing of Cleopatra here : there is no personal passion—or if there be it is entirely unsuspected and unavowed ; there is no pride of conquest, and there is fixed purpose of assisting

her lover in his career of fame. She cannot bear to be left behind—

“A moth in peace, and he go to the war.
To his honours and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.”

So there is much hope from her influence on her lover. Everything seemed to augur a prosperous and peaceful connection—

“The Moor
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,
And I dare think he will prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband.”

It is true, they did not know much of each other's character ; but with so much affection, subsequent increased knowledge might safely be foreseen to mean increased appreciation, or at least unshaken toleration. Shakespeare, it must be confessed, applies a very searching test to this airy supposition, which satisfies most of us to-day. He seizes upon two facts in Othello's relations with Desdemona : the ordinary mean, male monopoly spirit, the delight in keeping absolutely to and for himself his much coveted possession, and the equally usual incapacity to comprehend in all its loftiness his wife's innocent and faithful character. Even granted the extreme dexterity of Iago's suggestions of Desdemona's faithlessness, it is indeed a satire on the worth of a man's love if a few weeks after their union he can suspect his wife of a crime, upon the possibility of her being guilty of which he not only ought, but could have absolutely assured himself. Obviously, of her mind he had never troubled himself a second to find the character ; he did not know whether by nature she was faithful or fickle, impulsive or cold, true or false. He was aware she loved him, which showed very good taste on her part, and he knew if he married her he would have this love always by him—a very soothing, agreeable possession. As we have

said, Shakespeare tests this reckless failure to appreciate the only basis upon which a common life of man and woman can be surely happy and beneficial, with much severity. In early honeymoon days comes the whisper to Othello's ears that Desdemona is not faithful: as he has never known her mind, and there is no union here of souls, he has nothing wherewith to meet the rumour: perhaps Desdemona is naturally faithless—he had never thought of that: he could understand very well another man loving her—she is so loveable: but, by heavens! it should not be: she belonged to him and to him alone, and if living he could not keep her, she should die.

Jealousy, in short, which is inconsistent with true sympathy and communion of thought, takes possession of his soul. He exclaims—

“O curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites.”

Of course thrice cursed if marriage only means possession, and not the communion of spirit which precludes the possibility of illicit affections. Shakespeare points scornfully in this tragedy at this wretched estimate of marriage:

“Nay, we must think men are not gods,
Nor of them look for such observances
As fit the bridal.”

The result is pitiable; a great and useful life cut short; a noble mind twisted into the hideous shape which the unchecked wrath of a strong man gives it; and the fair prospect of a distinguished man helped, advised, and cheered in his work by a devoted and beautiful woman, spoiled and darkened.

Consider the pathos of the lines:—

“There where I have garnered up my heart,
Where either I must live, or bear no life,
The fountain from the which my fountain runs
Or else dries up: to be discarded there!”

Yes, his whole being seemed to find in her its motive of action, like flowing water from a spring ; she was the source from which the clear water flowed that refreshed and stimulated him ; but he only knew that the water was limpid and the issue copious ; he had no knowledge of the source, and when he was told it was poisoned he believed it. He gave devotion and love, but he did not know to whom ; and so he takes her at Iago's description.

The history which we have been considering shows how ill an influence on a man's life the sharing of it with a woman has whose character he does not know. In Hamlet's life we find this point emphasised.

His experience was no doubt unfortunate. Like Othello, he was prepared to marry one whom he did not know, and nothing but a special call to duty would have made him suspect her insufficiency. Up to their offer of marriage, neither knew or attempted to know, or even considered it necessary to know, whether his future wife was a Desdemona, or an Ophelia, or a Vergilia. A special circumstance made Hamlet understand Ophelia, and that marriage was prevented : none such hindered Othello from the step which proved so cruelly fatal to him and his bride alike.

Hamlet believed himself to be called upon to play the chief part in a great drama of retributive justice. The summons had an immediate effect ; he grasped at once the full weight of the burden of duty and the necessity of taking it up. But this is not the point with which we wish to deal. It is only necessary to realise that Hamlet was starting on an arduous and tragic journey, in order to seize the full significance of his disdainful rejection of Ophelia's company upon it. For here, as always, a woman had mingled with the game of life : we are told it is her privilege and man's advantage that she should do so. Will she thwart or aid his high purpose of duty ?

Hamlet, setting out in life, had no very definite notion in what direction his path would lie ; he was aware that high functions in the State would fall to his lot, and in order to discharge them well he had wise counsellors round him. But his disposition was too affectionate and communicative to be satisfied with these distant and punctilious relations. He had loved his father with more than usual fervour, and since his death and his mother's marriage—the shame of which had raised a barrier between them—he had felt lonely and friendless. At such a moment those who look for a regeneration of mankind by the additional wisdom and energy which a society working in couples—a sort of machinery of complement and compensation—must surely display, would expect that this solitary thinker would seek out some woman who, as his wife, would understand his soul and assist his purpose. Both Hamlet and they turn their eye towards marriage. Only with very different expectations and object. Hamlet feels lonely and sad : he forgets it when he is dallying with Ophelia : the process of self-introspection, which is curiously continuous in his character, is momentarily interrupted. Ophelia, on the other hand, accepts implicitly Hamlet's vows and hand, whilst she readily concedes to her father and brother the necessity of caution. Not that she or they wish for time to investigate his love : their object is more commercial than psychological—they wish to be assured that he really means to marry her.

At this moment a revelation from the spiritual world awakes Hamlet. Suddenly, as it were, across his path a vivid light falls, which reveals to his astonished eyes the nature of the ground that lies behind and before him, and a flash lights up the soul of the companion with whom he had chosen to walk it. High-souled and devoted, he faces at once the altered circumstances ; and, facing them, he sees

at a moment that his sweetheart is no companion for a man bent on an errand such as that to which he has been so peculiarly called. Hamlet knows now that neither his first impulse towards her, where enough passion mingled to make him believe it to be love, nor her facile surrender to him could be the preliminaries of a union of sympathy and co-operation. The scales drop from his eyes, and he sees, at least, what marriage must not be. He has gone to the brink, and only a revelation specially awful has given him eyes to see the precipice. "Hamlet, remember me," says his father's spirit. "Remember thee?" he cries,—

"Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All forms, all pressures past,
And thy commandment all alone shall live."

There can be no doubt that Ophelia's image comes within the category of trivial and fond.

Yet the determination to break off a connection which had been so pleasant was not come to without a struggle: he was really fond of Ophelia, he felt she was really fond of him. It is never pleasant for a man to disappoint hopes, nor to tell a lady who thinks she is passionately adored that she can never be his. And when Hamlet was forced to do so he felt to the full how he stood at the parting of the roads, and how pleasant was the one path which, without honour and seemingly without trial, he might lead with her, and how grim and arduous was the other, whereon he must march steadfastly alone. Besides he saw that just as she could not be his guide or helpmate in his task of vengeance, so she could not grasp the reason nor the honourable motives of his conduct. To her the idea of communion with the dead seemed madness; nor was the rupture of relations on account of a message received

from such a mysterious source more within her grasp. How deeply he lamented this, which before he had not suspected, is shown in his strange demeanour to her: "he falls to such perusal of my face as he would draw it." Yes, that pretty face which irrationally he had wished to call his own, to have ever by him, how completely different it seemed in the new light of his life! There was not an expression on it which insinuated that she understood him. No wonder

"he raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being."

How shall we present the verdict of Shakespeare on the influence which women exercise on men of mark, so far as we can detect it in these pictures which we have been studying?

It is curious, in the first place, to observe that the only instance which is given of a woman having a great influence on a great man and exercising it to his good proves—if it prove anything—that to Shakespeare's idea Providence may give a man a good mother, not at all that man can or generally does choose a good wife. Volumnia, essentially a woman, exercised on the whole a good influence on her distinguished son: whence we may generalise and say that women can be the wise advisers and companions of great men. Indeed the poet goes on to give several instances of such a capacity: and not only does he not dispute it, but he intimates how frequent are the opportunities for its display. We should then naturally infer that women, whose influence can be great and whose capacity can make it beneficial, will generally be influences for good. Yet Shakespeare does not confirm this conclusion: he distinctly intimates that facts by no means tally with it. And in choosing the relations of mother and son as his chief

instance of the satisfactory working of women's influence, he indicates the cause of this.

Volumnia was Coriolanus' mother, not his wife. A wife is generally chosen, and allows herself to be chosen to be a Vergilia and not a Volumnia, or in a different order of souls to be a Cleopatra and not a Lady Macbeth : a fact, as Shakespeare points out, which means not only a subtraction from the sum of good which man might work, but a cause of misery and suffering. For unless a woman be specially chosen for the high purpose of furthering a great cause—the task of a great man,—there can be no guarantee that the connection will be either happy or blessed. Indeed the statement that where women can aid, console, counsel, and ennoble, they will do so, is a much too broad generalisation : there are Cleopatras who do not aid, there are Lady Macbeths who do not ennoble, there are Portias who cannot counsel ;—and plenty of them in the world. And not only so : even granted that the generalisation be accurate, the statement would in any case contain a misleading presupposition that women are practically at liberty. To state that women, having the capacity, have the will to put it to the best service of mankind does not complete the truth, which is that men do not realise woman's sphere, however much she may do so herself. They continue to risk their fortunes and happiness by choosing the companion of their life, either to satisfy an æsthetic whim or ensure a not too critical admiration. That is the whole history of Othello and Desdemona, and of Coriolanus and Vergilia : that is the fatal danger which Hamlet was allowed light enough to see.

However, though men are too apt to neglect the Volumnias of the world, the analysis of her influence is instructive. It was as a woman—because she was a

woman—that she made the mistakes and won the victory in the crisis which they had not indirectly caused.

The dramatic incidents of the story bring out vividly, in the first place, that a woman's influence is enormously important, at once because great men readily adopt the views of capable women and because they are less quick in opportunely moderating them to suit special circumstances ; and, in the second place, that the reason of a woman's influence is often the reason of the blindness which makes her unable to coolly observe and truthfully to advise : she is blinded by the devotion which is the cause of her influence. Instead of wisdom's deliberate step Shakespeare seems to notice the rush and riot of passion : instead of cool observation, personal prejudices ; instead of the careful consideration of cause and effect, hasty inference.

But, on the whole, Volumnia is a striking picture of a wise helpmate to a great man : her influence was peculiarly a woman's, arising out of a devotion, a delicate tact, and a persistent eloquence, which no man has ever shown his friend.

We have dwelt thus long upon Shakespeare's portrait of woman as a wise adviser and loving companion, but, unfortunately, as we have seen, when man's choice is let to go free, there is generally a complete failure to appreciate the possibilities of a rational union—an unchivalrous blindness which women's facile surrender does much to perpetuate. For instance, it is not easy to say which would have been the most to blame had Hamlet and Ophelia married. As far as concerns him, his sudden perception that Ophelia was incapable of being his life's friend and counsellor revealed to him also that his project of marrying her had been nothing but an irrational and shameful obedience to sense. But to ignore her unfitness was not only unworthy of himself ; it was cruel to her. For a woman is

most unfortunate who, without much knowledge and therefore without much influence, joins herself to a great man and to his arduous work. Shakespeare makes us see this by his portrait of Brutus and Portia. This is a most pathetic picture. Portia is something more than Vergilia ;—she was not quite content to cherish a faithful and almost silent love for her husband : she wishes to know his schemes, and, though her awe of him prevents her aspiring to be his adviser, she claims to be his *confidante*. She loves him deeply, to the exclusion of all other feelings, but, perhaps through timidity or incapacity, she has taken up the place of spectator of her husband's acts—a spectator watching with unsleeping eye the movements of a beloved form. In return, Brutus, though he evinces great affection for her, feels naturally less keenly than she the need of a mutual counsel and agreement on great matters. He is quite prepared to act towards her with all the kindness that she can desire, but, as he does not depend on her advice for the shape his plans take, he does not think of them and her in the same connection. He is a lover and a politician, and the two rôles seem to him completely separate. It is not, as Portia thinks, that he is afraid of her disclosing his secrets : but since she has had no share in making his policy, it does not occur to him that he should communicate to her its details. But Portia's prayer is very modest : she does not wish to alter, she only begs to know his projects. Her affection being so great, she naturally cannot bear to be ignorant of the perils or the persecutions which lie along his path. A prayer so preferred by a beautiful and beloved woman is of course irresistible ; and Brutus' famous secret is told her. But, having gained her point, her position is far from enviable : unlike an adviser who knows all the circumstances which may thwart or assist the purposed act, she only knows the bare outline of the plan. Hence her

agitation after her husband has left her to do the great deed is extreme :—

“ I prithee, boy, run to the Senate house.

I would have had thee there, and here again,
Ere I can tell thee what thou should'st do there.”

Indeed the servant, had he been on the alert, might easily have suspected from her broken exclamations the plot that was going forward. In short, the position was intolerable : no one can feel confident of the success of a policy unless they understand it : and the news of her early death, caused by her grief at Antony's successes, comes as a shock, but not as a surprise. “ Ay me ! How weak a thing a woman's heart is ! ” is wrung from her in an agony of suspense. In truth Brutus' instinct not to tell her his great scheme was in the main right. Portia was obviously not capable of helping him effectively in counsel : and for a loving heart nothing is more painful than to know the bare fact that a dear one is executing an arduous and perilous task, without being able to go along with him in spirit in the execution of the detailed plans, which had been agreed upon together in intimate discussion. So a woman's influence is useless and even hindering when she cannot call her husband's schemes her own. The greater the influence, the more hindering for the man : the greater the love, the more intolerable for herself. For a man often concedes to a woman's affectionate solicitude the abandonment of great schemes, just because he suspects truly that if he attempt them the anguish of fear will break her heart.

From such cruelty Hamlet was spared : he awoke and saw the baseness of men who, to satisfy themselves, offer a union to women which, as it cannot stand upon the adaptability of tempers and the sympathy of ideals and hopes, is nothing but an insulting indignity.

This was Hamlet's experience, and it is worth considering. It suggests the cruelty, not only of the strong actor on life's stage who makes a woman his who is incapable of understanding or suggesting his policy, but also of him who joins himself to one whom he does not know. Othello would never have tortured the pure mind of Desdemona had he apprehended that if she were worthy of the devotion he offered her, her mind and character assuredly deserved to be known. What can indeed be more stupid for a man to give himself over to absolute devotion of a person whom he does not know? What can be the value of the assurances of permanent devotion to one whose outward graces and personal charms are the only qualities explored.

Men of little soul may be pardoned for failing to cherish a high ideal, but it is deplorable that great and distinguished men should submit to be governed by barbarous instincts. It is inconsistent with their other qualities: it works in ill with their other opinions. *Esprits d'élite* like Hamlet and Othello cannot endure not to know where they have "garnered up their heart": sooner or later they were certain to rebel against the lie of their existence. To Hamlet the revelation came in time: to Othello, too late, with the disastrous consequences for his fair career which we know. That it should not be an instinct in both shows with what difficulty even the great ones shake off the fashions around them.

Shakespeare does not, however, attribute only to man the fault of the broad fact that woman's influence on a great man's life is too often baneful. If it be true that men choose selfishly and coarsely, it is no less true that women accept blindly. Yet, in spite of all this, however little women can look to men to treat them honourably, in spite of the beclouding effect of fashion and of ideas among which they have grown up, the responsibility of assent lies

ultimately with them. Neither Desdemona nor Ophelia checked their lovers in their probably genuine belief that their affection was no selfish and sensuous sentiment, but a well-founded and permanent love.

And Shakespeare hints that until women join with men, or, if that cannot be, until women make an effort in repudiation of a system which degrades, embitters, imperils, saddens their common life, there is not much hope for a change. Whether, on the one hand, men will ever put a bridle on their arrogant egotism, or whether, on the other, women will ever resist the allurements of a soothed self-love, may be doubtful to some. In that case the inference would obviously be that, in spite of perfect equality, the best spirits will perform the best work alone.

Of course the influence on the lives of Othello, of Brutus, and of Coriolanus, which the women had who were their chosen companions was bad in the sense that it marred their career or failed either to help their purposes or ennoble their aims. The women were not bad : one was improperly appreciated, which led to distrust ; the others were incapable of adequately advising—a negative evil to the man but a positive grief to themselves.

But Shakespeare also shows that the existence of sympathy and perfect knowledge often supply bad women with the means to degrade a man or confirm him in his guilt. The Cleopatras and Lady Macbeths are an important and by no means small class. The former are the most despicable for they unfit a man to do anything and drag him down to the utter dishonour of being their valets. But the crime of the latter is not small, nor is it lessened by the world's admiration for something so devoted and skilful ; for with a keenness of vision and an authoritative influence, they allow, nay, urge, their great companion to go forward in deeds of guilt and shame. Very different

indeed are their methods : the one now confirms every weakness and yields to every whim, now tries, to the unutterable pain of her weak and sensitive slave, all the chords of his being to convince herself that their tune is love for her, and then again lulls him into disastrous apathy ; the other's devotion in the service of her master breeds an energy unknown to egotism, and she inspires him by her counsel and her courage to wade through the bloodiest villainy in order to attain his object.

We have said equality should mean co-operation. A study of some of Shakespeare's portraits make it easier to realise how far we are from that ideal. We have seen, in the first place, that there is much comely incapacity, which offers a temptation to even great minds to choose a woman for an object that debases womanhood ; we have seen also that man chooses with an unworthy object and an unwise haste, and yields to this very temptation. Naturally then the wrong women, chosen for the wrong object and acquiescing in the choice, is a state of things that puts out of the question an intimate co-operation of women with men of mark in effecting some great good. Moreover it perpetuates, and perhaps justly, the accepted moral and intellectual inferiority of women ; and the only efforts to correct this judgment are the harsh-toned protests of "strong-minded blue stockings." It cannot be expected that these will effect much : when the comely acquiesce and those who somewhat despise external grace protest, it is not difficult to foresee that the acquiescence will be taken by the world to be a more weighty and significant fact than the protest.

And from men there is very little to be hoped : even the best of them are strikingly egotistic. Shakespeare seems in no way to contest woman's claim to equality ; indeed he has drawn admirable portraits of broad-minded

and high-souled women. But, in his usual method of stating facts and leaving future generations to draw the inferences, it may be to discover the remedies, he has intimated the heavy responsibility that rests on woman, who has proved her equality with man, to recover their common life from the parody of union which it too often presents. Their failure to do so, if it can be no disproof, assuredly is the cause and justification of the common disbelief in their real equality.

BERTRAM TALBOT.

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SHAKSPERE AND HIS TIMES.

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SHAKSPERE AND HIS TIMES.

THE Shaksperian age stands out clear and distinct against the dimmer background of England's previous history ; it is illuminated, consciously and unconsciously, by a far greater number of writers than survive to us from any earlier epoch, so that we seem to know it almost as well as our own nineteenth century. But it is obvious that it would be impossible within the limits of a short paper even to touch upon the vast mass that has been written concerning this age, and that we may not waste the space at our command in wandering among the various authorities for Elizabethan England, we shall, in the main, let Shakspeare speak for himself. That Shakspeare is a sufficient witness for his age no one will question ; probably no writer has ever left so comprehensive a picture of the age in which he lived, perfect alike in its broad effects as in its minute details. Homer no doubt has preserved in all its features the memory of an entire epoch, which but for him would be unknown ; but Shakspeare, no less, were he and his era in like manner to be exiled beyond the bounds of human memory, would leave in his writings an all-sufficient testimony of his times, so that the Shaksperian age would be a fact no less firmly established, no less vividly portrayed, than the Homeric age.

We have spoken of our familiarity with Shakspeare's times through the abundance of records which illustrate

them, but this familiarity is increased by the fact that during the last three centuries English people seem to have changed very little, and many traits of character and habit are common to the England of Shakspeare and to the England of to-day. Already the love of country life, which is peculiarly an English taste, was developed amongst the nobles, the gentlefolk, and the sturdy yeomen. The town was for courtiers and tradesmen and "rude mechanicals," while the English gentleman was at home on his paternal acres, amid the farms and cottages of his tenantry. Shakspeare's own country breeding gives him an especial sympathy with this country life. Unlike Ben Jonson—who delights to give us the rough comedy of the streets, or the humours of Bartholomew's Fair,—Shakspeare, when he leaves the courts and camps of tragedy, is for passing out into quiet and pure air. He takes us into the green depths of the Forest of Arden, or the pleasant arbour where Justice Shallow invites us "to eat a last year's pippin of his own grafting," or to that sheep-shearing which Perdita's beauty made "as a meeting of the petty gods," or to the stately gardens where Olivia and Beatrice and Portia sun their beauty. Then we have the "thick-pleached alley" where Don Pedro discovered his love for Hero; and the Duke of York's garden, with a bowling green and "dangling apricocks," which wanted binding up. Nor is Shakspeare only at home with the flowers and fruits of summer. What a picture of an English mid-winter is the song put into the mouth of Holofernes and his clowns, "when icicles hang by the wall,"—every detail exactly what Shakspeare saw a hundred times in the lanes and village of Stratford, and we may see to-day.

Shakspeare's constant allusions to gardens are borne out by Harrison in his cotemporary *Description of England*, as it was when the poet was a boy. He points out that

from Henry IV to Henry VIII vegetables were little used in England, "whereas in my time," he says, "their use is not onelie resumed among the poor commons, but also fed upon as deintie dishes at the tables of delicate merchants." As soon as peace gave wealth and leisure to the English, gardens rapidly increased. Nor is this surprising. A people who have always expended care and attention on the more laborious side of agriculture, naturally when they are able seek for relaxation in the light diversion of ornamental gardening. Thus it was that England in this age was well stocked with gardens where "dubling and inlarging the proportion of floures" was a favourite occupation among the "curious and cunning" gardeners. One interesting feature appeared which is not to be found in modern gardens. Where professional doctors were scarce, every rich man allotted a large space of his garden to medicinal herbs, and would experiment on his household with simples imported from every part of the globe, and thus the gardens of Shakspeare's time had a real domestic importance beyond the mere gratification of a taste for out-door work.

Love of sport naturally attends love of country life, and is an equally strong instinct in Englishmen ; but of this in Shakspeare we do not find so much notice. Master Page's fallow greyhound, indeed, was beaten in a match on Cotsale, and bear-baiting was "meat and drink" to the valiant Slender, but with the exception of the chase of the deer and boar, and a few allusions to hawking, we have not much sport described. Harrison tells us that as early as his time foxes and badgers must have become extinct, "so earnestlie are the inhabitants bent to root them out, except it had beene to beare thus with the recreations of their superiors." Hare-hunting, in his opinion, should be only a ladies' pastime ; men should scorn the chase of any beast that could not stand at bay and offer resistance. Philip

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Stubbes, in his *Anatomy of the Abuses of England*, describes the fondness of the English for profaning the Sabbath day with bear-baiting, of which he says : " It is a filthie, stinking, and lothsome game," and, " to be plaine, I thinke the Devile is the Maister of the game, beareward and all." Cock-fighting also, proclaimed by " flags and ensigns hanged out," diverted the people from their proper Sunday observances. For all these forms of sport dogs of all descriptions were necessary, and in Shakspeare we find all kinds mentioned—the same familiar breeds which we have now. The hounds, " dewlapped like Thessalian bulls, matched in mouth like bells "; the English mastiffs, " of unmatchable courage," of whom three were a match for a bear, and four for a lion ; the spiteful lap-dogs, " Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart," who barked at the discrowned Lear ; and the immortal " Crab," " the sourest-natured dog that lives." The English troops at Agincourt " stand like greyhounds in the slips, straining against the start " ; Launce's mistress " has as many qualities as a water spaniel." " There is no countrie that may, as I take it, compare with ours in number, excellency, and diversitie of dogs." Such is the opinion of Harrison, and to support it he enumerates eight kinds of hounds, besides land and water spaniels, used in falconry.

We may gather from Shakspeare the fact (which we know from other sources) that music was far more generally cultivated in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than in later times. Instead of being left to professionals and young ladies fresh from school, music then was part of the education of a gentleman, and there were few fashionable gallants who could not perform, as well as compose, " a ballad to their mistress' eyebrow." Accordingly we find a constant flow of song and music in the plays, not only amongst lords and ladies, but in scenes

of homely and rustic life. The convivial Sir Andrew Aguecheek is "a dog at a catch," and Sir Toby assures Malvolio that they "did keep time in their catches." Slender, at Master Page's dinner, "had rather than forty shillings he had his book of songs and sonnets with him." Stefano and Trinculo troll a catch to edify Caliban, and take their parts in a way that no modern crew, save that of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, could rival. The milkmaids challenge Autolycus to sing a three-part ballad with them—they know their parts if he can bear his; and, according to Falstaff's philosophy, it was as bad to miss the right opportunity for filching as not to keep time in singing. All these points seem to indicate a more general love of music and training of ear than are to be found now-a-days. At the same time, where music was so common it was not, for the most part, of a very high class, and Stubbes deploras the depravity of the strolling minstrels who frequented "Tavernes, Alehouses, Innes, and other publique assemblies," and were ready with their "filthie ballads and scurvie rymes, serving for every purpose and for every companie." Stubbes, however, is perhaps prejudiced by the many abuses of music before him, and cannot follow his contemporaries in a genuine love of music for its own sake. He declares that "to drive away the fantasies of idle thoughts, solicitude, care, sorrowe, and such other perturbations and molestations of the minde, are the only ends whereto true Musick tends." All other music, in his opinion, is but "the food of love," and consequently to be abhorred. But whatever were its faults, the flood of music was irresistible; England was then literally a "nest of singing birds," and the English people sang, as birds sing, after their own inclination and pleasure. The outburst was spontaneous. "No pains, Sir; I take pleasure in singing, Sir," says the Clown in *Twelfth Night*.

This taste for music was even surpassed by the fondness of elaborate costume. Having escaped from the hard, regular confines of plate armour, Englishmen found nothing to fetter their imaginative ideas of dress, and fashion ran to the most ridiculous lengths in "costliness and curiositie," "pompe and braverie," and "fickleness and follie." Tailors no doubt enjoyed flourishing trades, but, as Harrison tells us, their trade was no easy one, to keep with the intricacies and varieties of the Elizabethan toilet. "How hardlie can the tailor please them in making it fit for their bodies? How manie times must it be sent backe againe to him who made it?" Although the general character of the costumes of this period is familiar to us, the details are difficult to grasp where fashion changed so rapidly. Of hats, according to Philip Stubbes, there were all sorts and descriptions: "nowe blacke, now white, now russet, now red, now greene, now yellowe, now this, now that," and these, too, worn with feathers and after the "unseemlie fashion" of the French, without bands. Then we have the most characteristic part of the costume, "greate and monstrous ruffes," a quarter of a yard deep, supported by "a certaine kinde of liquide matter, which they call starch," and propped up by wires "whipped over either with gold, thred, silver or silk"; yet for all this, as Stubbes maliciously observes, ready to "lye upon their shoulders like a dishcloute" when wind or rain overtake the wearers. Doublets were worn long and stiff, being "slashed, jagged, cut, carved, punked and laced"; and rich nether-stocks, "with quirks and clocks about the ancles" were the accepted fashion. All sorts of foreign modes of costume were imported into England, as we may gather from the description of Benedick's fantastical costumes—"a Dutchman to-day, a Frenchman to-morrow," and "a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward,

no doublet." Of women's costumes Shakspeare gives us the Duchess of Milan's gown, "set with pearls, with down sleeves, side-sleeves and skirts round, underborne with a bluish tinsel"; and the wardrobe prepared for poor Katherine, doubtless in the height of fashion, comprising "ruffs, cuffs, farthingales," a sleeve "like a demi-cannon" and "carved like an apple-pie," and a cap "moulded on a porringer." Paint and false hair were freely worn by women, and Shakspeare complains of "painting and usurping hair" in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

It is to be noticed that the costume of Shakspeare's time favoured in an especial manner an incident of which he and his contemporaries are very fond—the assuming of male attire by the heroine. As we see these parts now on our stage, the dress donned by actresses—which is generally something between a kilt and a riding-habit cut short—is so palpably different from the dress worn by the male players, that there is an absurdity in their seeming to be deceived by such a thin disguise. But the doublet and trunk hose of the time of Elizabeth and James I, as we may see from portraits of the time, slashed and padded, gave such a conventional outline to the figure, that a woman, provided only she were, like Rosalind, somewhat "more than common tall," could wear male attire without any difficulty, and many ladies of the time, when in circumstances of danger—or sometimes even for no greater risk than that of a long journey—would wear the dress of a cavalier or a page without any fear of discovery.

There is little reflection in Shakspeare of the ecclesiastical dissensions of his time. His large and gentle humour stands aloof from strifes of creeds and ceremonies, and if he sometimes couples Puritans and Papists together with a smile, as unwise zealots, he has no bitterness against the old Church or the new sectaries. We may notice, too, that

"the Friar," who plays a part in many of his dramas, is always a dignified and benevolent figure. The scurrility of Langland and the broad jests of Chaucer against the priest and the monk find no place in Shakspeare. To the secular clergy, as distinguished from the regulars, he is not quite so respectful. Sir Hugh Evans and Sir Oliver Martext are not reverend figures, nor, if "Sir Topas, the Curate," was adequately impersonated by the Clown, can we take him to have been a person of much dignity or sense. But, on the whole, we may see reflected in Shakspeare a golden age, when men's minds were in the highest sense religious, set free from superstition, and not yet darkened by doubt or embittered by party strife. Too soon Popish plots on the one hand, and Puritan factions on the other, alarmed and angered the nation, and forced the noblest minds into party and sectarian bonds. But as yet those heavy clouds hung only on the horizon; "England was merry England then," and her greatest poet wrote unhampered by anything to check his daring thought or his large charity.

R. T. WARNER.

THE ENDINGS
OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS.

THE ENDINGS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS.

HAMLET has often been revived in England, but managers always appear to take the hero's last words as sanctioning silence for the rest of the play. In the last forty lines, on turning to our Shakespeares, we find the story of the return of Fortinbras from Poland, the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and the claim of the young soldier to the succession. All this seems wonderful bathos ; and still more wonderful does it seem to-day that the curtain at the *Globe* should have fallen at the words, "Go, bid the soldiers shoot." These facts suggest several questions. Are such endings exceptional? If not, is there any class of plays to which they are peculiar? Then if this should appear to be the case, can we assign any reason for the occurrence of such endings in that class? And generally, what use, custom, or manner did Shakespeare observe in the termination of his plays? The present paper is an attempt to give some sort of answer to these questions. First, however, it must be premised that, as the illustration from *Hamlet* will have already suggested, there are two separate points to be considered—the introduction at some length of comparatively uninteresting matter after the climax of a play, and the actual words with which the play closes.

As to the first point, an inspection of the plays reveals a great difference between the Tragedies and the Comedies.

And indeed this is natural. The climax of a Comedy is always contrived to induce in the audience general good temper and disinclination to grumbling ; and no one feels the least cause for annoyance in the recital of the arrangements for the inevitable "lived-happily-ever-afterwards." And such recital Shakespeare always makes with a pleasant speediness. No one can complain even when the persons for whom he is arranging are not immediately concerned with the main plot. Nay, it is a pleasure to hear that Armado is capable of anything so sensible as following the plough three years for the sweet love of Jacquenetta, while it would be impossible for anyone to leave the woods of Arden contentedly in ignorance of the fortunes of the melancholy Jacques. Nor, again, will it now be urged that the fifth act of the *Merchant of Venice* is an unnecessary and wearisome anti-climax. Since the tragical conception of the character of Shylock has been restored to the stage it is abundantly clear that that act is an essential part of that "most merry and pleasant comedy." In a word, Shakespeare is never open to the charge of tameness in the termination of a Comedy.

But the case of the Tragedies is far different. It is necessary to examine each singly. *Romeo and Juliet*, however, must be excluded from the examination, because that play is not so much a tragedy as a beautiful tragic poem, comparable, in motive, in feeling, and in diction, with *Lucrece* and the *Midsummer Night's Dream* (which belong to the same period), and far removed in those points from the Tragedies properly so called. Three of these have endings very similar to that of *Hamlet*. The last forty lines of *Antony and Cleopatra* seem even tamer, with their dull argument about the manner of the death of that "lass unparalleled" and Cæsar's passionless directions for her funeral. Again, it is almost inevitable that the remarks

of Cassio and Ludovico should strike us as annoyingly trivial when we have just shuddered at the awful climax—

“I kissed thee ere I died : no way but this :
Killing myself to die upon a kiss.”

Again, when the death of Lear is presented in all the nakedness of its inexpressible sorrow, the comments of Edgar and Albany cannot fail to seem chilling, redeemed as they are in no small measure by the beautiful words of Kent. So far is this true that Kean and Macready in their acting editions stopped at the words,—

“He hates him much
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer,”

although by so doing they left out one of the greatest gems in Shakespeare. Now in all these four tragedies it is plain, on very little consideration, that what is felt to be frigid in each case owes its place to a desire of the poet to explain what will be the position of the surviving characters in the ordinary years which are to succeed the extraordinary days represented, and thus to develop the historical as opposed to the dramatic aspect of the story. This desire can have no scope when no characters of importance survive the catastrophe : hence after the death of Coriolanus the play to which he gives his name draws to a speedy and natural close. The close of *Macbeth* is similar to this ; but it is a somewhat singular instance, as it is a tragedy of which many people would say that it ends well. *Timon* is an entirely exceptional play : it is, if such a turn may be given to the phrase, a tragedy of manners : there is no plot worthy of the name, and no climax. *Timon* cannot return to Athens, and therefore his death is necessary to bring the play to an end : the audience is kept waiting after his death through the long parley between Alcibiades and the senators to hear the epitaph which he had written to be his

countrymen's oracle. If it is felt that Timon's death is in any sense a climax, then there is an anti-climax in the subsequent discussion, which needs all the interest that can be found in the epitaph to make it tolerable. *Julius Cæsar* has been reserved as an example which throws the strongest light on the question under consideration, though its interpretation may seem to be uncertain. The uncertain point is where the climax should be found. The death of Brutus holds the position in which it is natural to seek it: but the title suggests that it should be sought in the death of Cæsar. If the first solution is correct, the play may be compared to *Coriolanus*; but if, as seems more likely, the second, then two entire acts follow the climax, which develop its historical consequences, and we must needs consider the motive of the play to be epical, and so compare it with the Histories. Now there is an antecedent probability that points of comparison should exist between the great Tragedies and the Histories. The first original Tragic writing which Shakespeare undertook was the group of Histories with which his first period closes, namely, the two *Richards*, 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, and *John*.¹ Then he forsook tragedy for an interval of six years of comic writing.² It cannot be wondered at—indeed it might rather be expected—that, on resuming Tragedy in 1602, his work should show signs of the school of Historical Tragedy in which he had received his early training. It would be interesting to seek for other signs of this influence, and probably they might be found even in the Comedies. For instance, it is a fact that there is no Comedy except the *Taming of the Shrew* in which a duke or king does not occur; and those often speak with a pompousness which

¹ To this statement *Romeo and Juliet* is an entirely unimportant exception. It represents, as said above, a style of Tragic writing which he never again attempted.

² It is clear that, of the Histories, *Henry IV* and *Henry V* are precisely those which lean towards Comedy rather than Tragedy.

reminds us of the kings of France, lord mayors, etc., in the Histories. However that may be, the point which has been noticed in the endings of Shakespeare's Tragedies seems an almost certain example of such an influence ; for the full development of the story in all its consequences to all the characters is natural and proper in historical drama. Indeed it is precisely on this ground that such endings as that of *King John* are to be justified, which from a dramatic point of view seem little short of irksome.

If it is allowed that the origin of these endings is the retention in Tragedy of a use derived from Historical Dramas, it becomes necessary to enquire what justification exists for such a retention. The force of habit can hardly be accepted for so great a man as Shakespeare, unless some real propriety can be alleged in justification of it. Such a propriety may perhaps be discovered if we examine closely the nature of the apparent objection to such endings. After a Tragic climax it is our desire to sound the utmost depths of its sorrowfulness by meditating on the situation over and over again without interruption. There is a kind of pleasure in realizing pain. So too in the actual world overpowering griefs produce a similar effect on some of their victims, making them desire seclusion from everyday business that they may mourn long and in solitude. And just as that everyday business will unrelentingly intrude upon their mourning, so Shakespeare, here as ever the unconscious echo of nature, causes the most commonplace and trivial things to succeed closely the greatest and most terrible. This view is strongly supported by the fact that the two plays which end most quickly after the climax are just those in which the hero's death excites least sorrow—*Macbeth* and *Coriolanus*. Shakespeare nowhere aims at an artistic heightening of Tragic effect : he is content to follow nature, which is, after all, the truest aim of art.

Further, there may be found in every anti-climax, if it be read carefully, interesting studies of the effect of tragical events upon certain types of character. The hard practical ruler stands unmoved beside the lifeless body of Cleopatra. The ambitious Fortinbras is only for a moment awestruck by the spectacle of "so many princes" so suddenly laid low; while in the same awful scene the official remains official still, and can only say "The sight is dismal" and enquire for "his thanks." On the other hand, Albany is an instance of a man unable to do more than to speak and act mechanically, dazed with drinking the cup of mourning to the dregs. Such studies of character are not unworthy, surely, of the great Tragedies which they close.

It has been suggested that in this class of plays Shakespeare employed habitually unimpassioned conclusions; and an attempt has been made to explain the origin of this habit and to justify it. Some further illustration of these points will be found in the discussion of the final lines and words of the plays, which will form the second division of this paper.

As to the form of the final lines, the leading facts are as follows. Out of thirty-five¹ plays twenty-four end with two rhymed lines, four with blank verse, two with prose, four with an incomplete portion of a line following two rhymed lines, and *Twelfth Night* with a song. *Much Ado about Nothing* and *As You Like It* were intended to terminate with a dance. There are six epilogues, two in prose and four in verse (to which may be added Puck's speech at the end of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*): these are only attached to Comedies and the Comico-Historical Plays, 2 *Henry IV* and *Henry V*.

¹ i.e., Including 1 *Henry VI* and *Titus Andronicus*, sufficiently Shakspearian to warrant their use here, though not in the preceding portion of the paper. For the form of *Pericles*, as we have it, Shakespeare is in no way accountable: that play is therefore not included, nor of course can *Henry VIII* be used in a discussion of his endings.

As to the substance of the final lines, three classes of endings may be distinguished :—

(a) An epigram on the play or on some event in it, as in the *Merchant of Venice* :—

Gratiano.—Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

Other examples are in the *Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Lear*, and *Cymbeline*.

(b) A more or less epigrammatic saying upon the future of some of the personages. Instances are to be found in 1 *Henry VI*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Richard III*, *John*, 1 *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Macbeth*, and *Troilus and Cressida*. The instances are necessarily so various that there is no advantage in quoting any one.

(c) Directions to some or all of the actors as to the manner or object of their leaving the stage or their destination. For instance, Benedick's last words in *Much Ado about Nothing* : "Strike up, pipers." Similar directions end *Hamlet*, *Timon*, and *Coriolanus*. Another good instance is in the last words of *Love's Labour's Lost* : "You that way ; we this way." Similar to this is the incomplete line which ends 2 *Henry IV* : "Come, will you hence ?" The *Tempest* may also be quoted :—

Prospero.— I'll deliver all,
And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales,
And sail so expeditious that shall catch
Your royal fleet far off. [*Aside to Ariel*] My Ariel, chick,
That is thy charge : then to the elements
Be free and fare thee well ! Please you, draw near.

The *Winter's Tale* ends in a very similar manner. In this class too are the last lines of *Richard II*, 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Measure for Measure*, all of which are strikingly similar to each other. The last may serve for an example :—

"So bring us to the palace ; where we'll show
What's yet behind that's meet you all should know."

And, with something more of divergence, those of *Antony and Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Othello*. It must be remembered that endings of this class lost something of their abruptness on the stage because they were accompanied by movements on the part of the actors which appealed to the eyes of the spectators.

Such are the facts: a few remarks are naturally suggested by them. First, although blank verse occurs at the end of a play in two cases which fall under (*b*), and those two of the earliest plays—1 *Henry VI* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, with these exceptions no rhymeless endings occur outside class (*c*), which is of course the least formal of all in substance. The two prose endings may be explained by the fact that Benedick only in two scenes, Armado only as Hector of Troy, speaks in verse ; but this is not conclusive, as may be seen from the *Merchant of Venice*, Act I, Sc. ii, where a prose scene ends with a rhymed couplet. All the four plays—*Hamlet*, *Timon*, *Coriolanus*, and 2 *Henry IV*—which end with an incomplete line following two rhymed ones, fall under (*c*). Also the remaining two blank verse endings fall into this class, those of the *Tempest* and the *Winter's Tale*. When it is considered that these two plays are two of Shakespeare's very latest, it seems as if his final judgment was on the side of these more informal endings, for which through his three former periods he shows an increasing favour.¹

Secondly, all the modes in which plays are ended may be paralleled from the endings of scenes. The play of *Macbeth* alone exhibits instances in scene-endings of all the play-endings, classified exhaustively according to form and

¹ In the first period there are four plays with endings counted in class (*c*) out of twelve ; in the second, four out of ten ; in the third, seven out of ten.

substance, except three, one of which is that of prose endings, which is a necessary exception as there is no prose near the end of any scene in *Macbeth*. One or two instances will suffice. The ending of 2 *Henry IV* finds a parallel in Act III, Sc. iii :—

“Thou marvell'st at my words : but hold thee still :
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
So, prithee, go with me.”

The ending of the *Merchant of Venice* finds a parallel in Act V, Sc. iii :—

Doctor [aside].—Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here.”

It follows that there is no more effort after effect in the endings of plays than in the endings of scenes.

Thirdly, there is an important point about the epigrammatic endings. No tragedy ends with a smart and lively epigram. That in *Lear* is sad ; that in *Titus Andronicus* is dull ; *Troilus* ends with a comic speech ; *Macbeth* ends more to our satisfaction than our sorrow, and therefore appropriately closes with a bright epigram. Wherever the end of a play is calculated to excite deep emotion, there is an insignificance in the final words, similar to that which has been noticed before in the final passages. It is as if Shakespeare shared something of a feeling which a very different poet exhibited when at the end of no common ode he recalled the thoughts of his Roman readers from the noblest death in their history to the pleasant fields of their Sussex and the warm sea-breezes of their Torquay :—

“non aliter tamen
dimovit obstantes propinquos
et populum redivit morantem,
quam si clientum longa negotia
diiudicata lite relinqueret
tendens Venafranum in agros
aut Lacedaemonium Tarentum.”

E. J. PALMER.

T

SCHOOL SHAKSPERE SOCIETIES

SCHOOL SHAKSPERE SOCIETIES.

ONE must needs apologize for writing on Shakspere.

The mass of literature that centres round him already far exceeds what any other secular author can claim, and criticism has always a tendency to reproducé itself. The present writer, however, can truthfully state that he has read very little of the commentators; his knowledge of Shakspere is due almost exclusively to the Winchester College Shakspere Society; and the object of the following essay is to notice some of the advantages which such a school society affords, and to suggest a few general considerations as to its purpose and conduct.

There are certain books which everybody is supposed to have read. *Robinson Crusoe* is one of them; but the plays of Shakspere stand at the head of the list. For several reasons boys do not readily read Shakspere by themselves. A play takes some time to go through, and the knowledge of this fact deters them from beginning it; for it must be read as a whole in order to be properly appreciated, and requires closer attention than epic or lyric poetry. At the same time there is no necessity for an accurate knowledge of Shakspere. A certain number of popular notions regarding him are casually picked up and confidently repeated; these, with the commoner quotations suffice for ordinary use and reputation.

A school society provides a remedy for this ; and, further, it helps to prevent another similar evil. There is a prevalent tendency at the present time not to read books, but to read about them. For this unfortunate habit magazines are largely responsible ; the other main cause is a certain *cacoethes loquendi*, which sets men chattering, whether with tongue or pen, on so many subjects and at such a pace that they can hardly be expected to find time for reading what they talk about. An article on the sonnets of Shakspeare in a monthly review must be read before the review has departed, while the sonnets themselves, which are always at hand, may be deferred to a more convenient season ; and it happens sometimes that many articles on a subject are read as they appear, and a specious show of knowledge is acquired, without the least intimacy with the work on which the discussion has been taking place. Now a school Shakspeare Society exists to read its poet, and if it writes or talks about him, that is a work of supererogation ; but, in any case, it can see that the reading comes first. It has also the advantage of real *dramatis personæ*, among whom at any given time there will probably be one or two good readers. It reads a play at a sitting, or at most in two ; and it obtains some insight into that which constitutes no little part of Shakspeare's greatness, the life and action of the play upon the stage.

It would of course be feasible to read the plays of any other poet in the same manner, and many Shakspeare societies are very unfaithful to their eponymous hero. There is little to be urged against admitting the classic comedies of Sheridan and Goldsmith, but the line should be drawn to exclude the works of more recent authors. The literary judgments of boys are generally narrow and one-sided, though liable to frequent alteration ; it is improbable that any unanimity could be attained in adjusting

the claims of modern poets upon the society's attention, and an emphasised dissension of view must retard the advent of more catholic tastes. But this is the glory and great good fortune of Shakspeare, that his rank among poets is not called into debate; living writers have their opponents and apologists: he has only his admirers. Browning societies are composed largely of partizans, whose enthusiasm provokes the resentment of less sympathetic readers, whereas the enthusiasm of a Shaksperian is accepted without envy or demur. And a little enthusiasm is very necessary in a society of schoolboys, who are always inclined to lag more or less behind the standard set them.

It is clearly a benefit to those who are engaged in the critical study of the ancient classics, that they should at the same time be reading a great author, so to speak, in the broad. One is apt amid a multitude of details to lose general effect. Let anyone recall his earliest opinion of a Greek play, as he groped through it line by line and sentence by sentence; and then let him contrast with this some representation, if he has been fortunate enough to see any, of a Greek play upon the stage, or at least the impression now produced upon him by a rapid and easy perusal. Masterpieces of literature are something more than quarries for the grammarian and philologist, though weary scholars may at times be tempted to doubt it; so much the more welcome therefore is the assurance of it which members of a Shakspeare Society receive. In endeavouring to obtain an insight into a dead language there is no course open except a minute analysis of its remains; but where the language is living and our own, and, as it were, of one soul with ourselves, there we can be content to feel its beauty without examining its etymology and syntax. Such investigations are no doubt intended to serve the cause of English scholarship; but, though independently admirable, they are distinct

from the study of a literature which can be enjoyed without them. No one will deny that nineteenth century English, like so many contemporary products, has a taint of Brummagem; but the remedy for this lies rather in reading our classics, than in collecting and comparing their ἀπαξ λεγόμενα. The editors of the plays of Shakspeare, which are being issued by the Clarendon Press, have made a lamentable mistake; notes such as theirs would be tedious on a dead language: choking a living one, they are quite unendurable. The attention of Englishmen should be called not to archaisms but to barbarisms; if familiarity with the language of the Elizabethan period could check, as indeed it can, the corruption of the Queen's English to-day, that alone would be justification for a dozen Shakspeare Societies. Those who wish to serve the cause of literature can do so in no better way than by collecting and gibbeting, from newspapers, magazines, and novels, an *index expurgatorius* of words and idioms. The deplorable apathy of the public conscience in this matter may be seen most glaringly by the study of advertisements; but a certain number of atrocious words have lately found their way into the language of art; three of these, "rendition" in one branch, "photogravure" and "typogravure" in another, will serve as specimens; but each man's memory, with an *horresco referens*, will suggest to him from all sides too many others.

It is indeed anise and cummin to make even a literary study of Shakspeare, so long as these vital matters are daily disregarded; but if anyone cares, when he has made peace with his mother-tongue, to examine her riches, he will find sufficient opportunity afforded, so far as Shakspeare is concerned, within the system of a society. The Baconian question should, however, be disregarded by all who do not intend to devote themselves to a thorough and useful

investigation of it. Seeing how slender are the foundations upon which the great fabric of the theory rests, the ordinary reader may well be content for the present to accept the orthodox belief ; for as surely as scepticism unsettles morals, will Shaksperian heterodoxy unsettle Shaksperian practice ; the nose of the Baconian, scenting evidence everywhere, diverts his eyes from poetry to premises, and where hitherto he has seen the finger of the poet, he detects henceforth the finger of a forger. Mr. Paley indeed may think that he appreciates the beauty of Homer every whit as fully as Mr. Gladstone can ; yet few besides himself (if so be that he thinks so) could concur in the opinion. What can be more disturbing to the Homeric attitude of mind than that one should be constantly interrupted by forms which one believes to be Alexandrine ? or what more in Homer's prejudice, than to see with unwilling eyes whatever facts conflict with one's most cherished theory ? In the same way the Baconian heresy jars upon the appreciation of Shakspeare ; and its supporters, "fit though few," may well be content to complete their edifice of proof without the fruitless adhesion of mere dabblers in hypotheses ; feeling, in the words of the author of *Henry V*, "the fewer men, the greater share of honour." It was stated in the papers not long ago that a German has discovered Shakspeare to have been the author of the *Novum Organum* ; if the statement was correct, *reductio ad absurdum* has reached its climax.

Nevertheless, the doctrine of the right of private judgment is so prevalent at the present day, that few may be willing to acknowledge the inutility of plunging for oneself into the shallows of Baconianism. Passing therefore to the general question, let us consider in what other ways our Society may best study its Master. Shakspeare has been called "all mankind's epitome," and for range and beauty

has been compared with nature herself. But if we notice what has been accomplished in the study of nature and mankind, we shall see that there have been employed two principal methods. For philosophers have either looked at matters in a lump, and, catching sight of certain salient features, have reasoned vaguely and inconclusively by the light of these ; or they have proceeded to certain results by a careful collection and examination of facts. The former method, as applied to Shakspeare, has many attractions, requiring far less knowledge and attention ; on the only occasion when the writer took up a play for examination, he has no doubt that he spoke of Cordelia in the most unrestrained and flowery terms. In truth, there are not many schoolboys who can write on some Shaksperian subject an ethical essay that is neither plagiarised nor worthless ; and however profitable an exercise this may be in the use of their language, it is not profitable (which is all we are now concerned with) for the study of Shakspeare. Indeed we have the high authority of Mr. John Morley for thinking that our age lays too much stress on essay-writing, and that after all the cultivation of style is not so important as to enrich the mind. However this may be, a *réchauffé* of commentators is but a poor dish, and without the commentators an ethical essay by a boy is also likely to be sorry stuff.

It seems therefore that we should proceed upon the second method. If the members of a society care to make essay-writing part of their work, they should draw from independent observation of the poet, rather than second-hand through his interpreters ; not enveloping a slender stock of references with vague and sounding generalities, but setting them forth, whether few or many, in clear arrangement, with a brief indication of the position which they are to establish, and of their applicability to the

purpose. In the first place, this is much better training for the writer ; and secondly, it is more suggestive to his audience. The elegant expression of acknowledged truths may perhaps tickle the fancy, but cannot feed the mind ; whereas well-marshalled evidence, however weak the conclusions accompanying it, will always stimulate thought, and may possibly suggest more valuable deductions. Moreover, it is often interesting and profitable to hear proof of views which no one questions, that we may be able to give, to ourselves or others, a reason for the faith that is in us.

It is naturally difficult, among the innumerable points of special study that Shakspeare (like any other classic) offers, to select those to which our Society may best apply itself according to this method of work. Certain general rules, however, may be given. A subject chosen ought not to be cumbrous ; if wide, it should nevertheless be capable of adequate treatment within the limits of one or two plays only ; and conversely, if involving many plays, it should not involve much of any of them. In the second place, it should, so far as possible, bear some relation to other work or occupations of the person who has chosen it. The student enters upon a subject with much greater pleasure if he can bring to bear the knowledge that he already possesses, than if he is obliged laboriously then and there to acquire whatever preliminary information may be necessary. Therefore for some it is well to notice the fidelity of Shakspeare to nature, or to check the accuracy of his description in any place with which they may happen to be acquainted ; for some, again, it is well to compare him with authors of other nations, and with other authors of his own. Thirdly, it is allowable to particularise a special branch of Shaksperian investigation which is of unusual interest and profit ; for it is true of Shakspeare (and it is also true of Homer)

that all the persons introduced upon the stage are studied characters. To work out the truth of this statement, by tracing each character as it declares itself not in speech only but in action, is to many minds an attractive study ; and the training that it gives, if under competent supervision, may tend to produce a sanity of judgment, in estimating details of expression and shades of meaning, which scholars and commentators of all ages seem not infrequently to lack. There is a similar probability, in the comparison of Shakspeare with his English successors, that by noticing and estimating the debts of the latter, a scholar may so train his literary instinct in the language that he can most easily and surely grasp, as to be able to decide with some accuracy such questions of imitation in ancient authors : many editors put forward parallelisms which at first sight appear fanciful and arbitrary ; but mental association in these matters is much more subtle than would be supposed.

Nothing need be said to enforce appreciation of the advantage gained by practice in reading aloud ; the public is itself awaking to a recognition of it. As to the caste, however, one thing is clear : the best readers should always have the best parts. Nobody cares to hear these marred by a bad delivery, nor to read what he is conscious is beyond him. On the other hand, second and third rate parts may be distributed among second and third rate readers with some attempt at compensation : it being always remembered that the ordinary reader cares really quite as much for quantity in his part as quality.

Along with the arrangement of the caste arises a similar question, as to choice of plays. It is well to read Shakspeare through, as far as is possible, and for this purpose a society should be willing to submit occasionally to a reading comparatively dull. But the great plays (particularly

Hamlet, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*) deserve and repay more frequent attention ; and there are also some which are obviously unsuitable : it is enough if this class is not swollen by the addition of plays that are only unpopular : the cycle that remains outside it is large enough for the needs of a society which is constantly changing its members.

To sum up, a school Shakspeare Society exists for two principal reasons : that its members may acquire a thorough knowledge of the poet's text, and also a reverent use of their native language. Essay-writing should be regarded as subsidiary ; above all, it should be based on definite and honest study. The enthusiasm of the Society is to be reserved for the poet himself ; and, if thus directed, there can be no one who would wish to limit it.

H. B. JOSEPH.

NOTE TO ESSAY ON
SCHOOL SHAKSPERE SOCIETIES.

BY THE EDITOR.

I AM glad to call general attention to the above Paper, written as it is from the stand-point of a Public School boy to Public School boys, because we may reasonably hope that this Volume of Papers may fall into the hands of the managers or members of similar Societies to our own, and may point out in some respects, at all events, what is to be aimed at, in some, it may be, what to be avoided. I am thankful to believe that our example, venerable as it now is from age and from tradition, is followed in many places already, and our system recognized as one on which others may be modelled. In summarising it I shall doubtless repeat what has been noticed historically in the Introduction to this volume; but as most readers omit an Introduction on principle, the repetition may pass unnoticed.

I regard then as the first necessity of every such Society, that it should be under the absolute control of some permanent President, necessarily a Master, who should have made of the Author a special study, and should if possible have a real talent for delineating character, and a special knowledge of elocution as an art.

Strange as it may seem in statement, I regard it as absolutely necessary that he should be able to take the onus of the principal character in the greater plays at least himself;—by this fact, anything of the nature of jealousy is avoided in the arrangement of the caste, and by constant practise he will be sure in time to furnish a reasonably good model to successive generations of accurate and suggestive reading; the permanent element also in the Society is among schoolboys a matter of first importance. In

saying this I am only repeating the warning of one of the best magisterial Shaksperians with whom I have been acquainted in my lifetime, the late Bishop Cotton, sometime Head Master of Marlborough, of whose enthusiasm in the School Shakspeare Society old Marlburians of a certain standing will have a lively recollection. It should be his endeavour to *train*, as time and circumstance permit, the leading members of his company; others will in a surprisingly short time learn as listeners only *from* them; and the generous interest which will be taken in the contemporary masters of the art by their schoolfellows, will greatly aid the promotion of a fair level of appreciation and proficiency. The first object of the Society is to train the ear and the voice, for by these alone can the vehicle be obtained for conveying the higher lesson in the study of pure English, noble sentiment, and consummate knowledge of men and things, of which our Author is the best single exponent. It is also very desirable, if possible, that a few other members of the School, beside those actually in the Society, should have, from time to time, the privilege of attending; by them a literary taste will also indirectly be formed, an interest in the Society be maintained, and a stimulus given to the readers themselves.

A social surrounding, the presence of ladies as accessors, the addition of music when suggested by or suitable to the play in progress are also valuable aids, and make the Shakspeare evenings a pleasure to be looked forward to at the time, and remembered afterwards with gratitude.

That the Society shall be select and privileged is necessary to its very existence, and it should be tenaciously limited to the highest classes in the school roll.

There may be, I think, open nights, when the play is carefully prepared beforehand, and labour expended on the proper delineation of the characters and lively and effective delivery and accommodation of part to part. With ourselves these open nights are often really artistic performances, with every detail elaborated, and are greatly valued by the auditors privileged to attend. But there is a danger also in these more histrionic efforts—a danger

of the study of the Poet and of English giving way to an idea of personal display, and of the cultivation of a love of acting which may prove a snare to those who have an innate predisposition to it. Therefore, if possible, side by side with the opportunities necessarily arising for the cultivation of voice expression, elocution, taste, and style, there should be found some outlet for study and thought as well: our Essayist has discussed the advantages and the dangers of written papers; but on the whole I think that they are a desirable adjunct. Points also may be raised for discussion, if it can only be secured that the discussion be *general*—characters may be analysed—history developed—the chronology of the plays opened out—and their varied styles compared.

I have already noticed in the Preface to the Essays valuable work undertaken by our Members, which cannot be said to have had no result because it has not led to any permanent record within these pages. The opportunities indeed for a literary side to a School Shakspeare Society are simply innumerable. It cannot be expected that they should initiate anything absolutely original, but the results may be original as far as the student himself is concerned, and that is all that matters.

I think that it will be found that a Society in a Public School, conducted somewhat on the lines which I have suggested, will be an invaluable addition indirectly to the positive school teaching.

Our Essayist has already suggested wants in the ordinary curriculum which it may supply; and I believe that those who are, or who have been Members of the Winchester College Shakspeare Society will be only too ready to acknowledge the benefits to their scholarship which they have derived from it; and that many who have, either from their own neglect or want of opportunity, been excluded, are now regretting a loss which in this special way it is too late to supply.

C. H. H.

KING RICHARD III:

PAPER READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY FEBRUARY 12, 1887.

KING RICHARD III.

“THE Tragedy of King Richard III: with the landing of Earle Richmond and the Batell at Bosworth.”

This is the title which is given to this play in the first folio edition published in 1623, and although it is now printed and classed among the English Historical plays, it differs from them in many important points, and possesses most of the elements of a true tragedy. The date of the play it is impossible to fix precisely, but it was first printed in 1597, and appears to have been written three or four years earlier, thus approximating in date to *Richard II* and *King John*; it was possibly composed just after *Henry VI*, to which play it is most closely allied, not only in subject, but also in manner of treatment, thought, and diction. So close indeed is the connection of the plays in some respects that a knowledge of the one is almost necessary for a complete interpretation of the other. The relations of Richard and Clarence in the beginning of *Richard III* are only a development of the position in *Henry VI*, in which Richard lays his plots for the estrangement between his brothers, and the opening soliloquy is, as it were, a continuation of a similar passage in the Third Part of *Henry VI*, Act III, Sc. ii. But though most nearly allied to *Henry VI* in treatment, it shows a decided advance on that play in dramatic art, though still decidedly inferior to *Richard II*,

the play which immediately succeeded. The author has not as yet quite thrown off the lyric style of his predecessors, and nearly approaches to ancient drama in the lamentations of the women in Act II, Sc. ii and Act IV, Sc. i, and again in the reiterated curses of Margaret. Still the conception of *Richard III*, belonging as it does to the second period of Shakspeare's plays, is a distinct improvement on all that preceded it. So far as the history goes, Shakspeare seems to have followed pretty closely historical truth as he knew it from the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed, if we except such details as the compression into a few days of the six years that elapsed between the death of Henry VI and the assassination of Clarence, and of the like period between the latter event and the death of Edward IV; the unities of time and place had to give way to dramatic unity.

But though following the chronicles sufficiently closely as regards the actual facts, the author deviates pretty sharply from his authorities in the delineation of his central figure. Shakspeare has been accused of painting the character of Richard Plantagenet in too unfavourable colours, but how attractive he makes him in comparison with the monster presented by the chronicles can be seen by the most cursory examination of Holinshed's description. In the latter we see nothing but the brutal, hypocritical plotter, whose very nature leads him to commit the crimes by which he obtains his power; there is no hint of the really fine mental qualities of Shakspeare's Richard, which fascinate us almost against our will. For here, as in the *Merchant of Venice*, and in an even more marked degree, it is the character which may be described as "the villain of the piece" that enlists all our sympathies, while the remaining figures arouse no feelings save those of pity, and even impatience. For in the Richard as delineated by Shakspeare we find a very different personage to the

prototype of the chronicle. Here we have a mind that, under more favourable physical conditions, might have produced a great and faithful minister and ruler; but, by what some would call a freak of nature, this mind is clogged by a body that warps its every better feeling and crushes every noble thought. The man feels himself to be different to all those around him, and perceives that they are only too ready to recognise the fact; and so he is brave, but, under the influence of this conviction, his bravery becomes mere brutality; he is gifted with a quick and ready intellect, but it degenerates into hypocritical cunning; and the qualities which might have made him a distinguished warrior and a successful diplomatist, are only used to gratify his revenge and to aid in the fulfilment of an unworthy ambition. But, distorted though it appears, there is something in the character of Richard that cannot fail to attract. We recognise throughout that cunning and cruelty are no part of the man's true nature. Feeling himself more gifted than all the selfish plotters by whom he is surrounded, and yet despised and flouted by all, he sets before him the crown as the goal of his ambition and determines that nothing shall stand in his way towards the attainment of that goal. Himself the object of no human affection, he feels none, and all impediments are ruthlessly sacrificed to his design; brothers, nephews, wife, friends, without a single feeling of compunction, he sees them all go that he may gain his end. And how adapted the man is for the fulfilment of his schemes! gifted with consummate powers of speech, keen mind, and piercing wit, and at the same time a brave and skilful commander. It is at first almost impossible to believe that the figure presented at the end of the play, when we see him ravening in blood, can be the same keen, adroit man, whom we saw earlier, deceiving Clarence by his tears, Anne by his flattery,

Buckingham and Hastings by his expressions of undying affection and gratitude. But the hypocrisy and cunning form no true part of his nature ; he only consents to stoop that he may attain the crown of his ambition, when he need stoop to none. Thus we are presented with an extraordinary mixture of genius and dissimulation, of suavity and recklessness.

Round this central figure Shakspeare has woven a tribe of minor figures, all calculated to bring out the principal character into stronger relief. The cunning and craft of Richard are contrasted with the openness and trustfulness of his brothers. The relatives of the Queen too, though greedy and selfish, are confiding and unsuspecting. The climax of misplaced trust is exhibited in the person of Hastings : unwarned alike by the fears of Lord Stanley and the fall of the Queen's relatives, confident that Richard "loves him well," he deems himself so far his trusted friend that he actually speaks on his behalf, while Richard is planning his destruction. But the most effective foil to Richard among the male characters is perhaps found in Buckingham, his cunning and unscrupulous tool, who is an image of what Gloster might have been, deprived of his greater mental powers. We see merest craft in the place of Richard's quick perception, simple adroitness and selfish greed in place of great ambition. To complete the male characters of the piece we have the portraits of the youthful princes, which are the nearest approach to a separate interest to be found in the play. The author depicts them with the most affectionate care, contrasting the modesty and clear-sightedness of the youthful Prince of Wales with the pertness and ready wit of the little Duke of York.

Nevertheless it was on the women of the drama that Shakspeare chiefly depended to emphasise his central creation, and to Anne, Elizabeth, and Margaret we must look

for characters the most opposite to the character of Richard. And it is perhaps natural for this reason that most of the attacks that have been made on this play have been directed mainly on its female element. We see in the first place the masculine strength of Richard brought out by the almost exaggerated feminine weakness of Anne; and indeed it is often asserted that her character calls for nothing but contempt; but she is surely more worthy of pity than of any other feeling, from her absolute want of all moral firmness. She is a woman capable of the most passionate feeling, but at the same time so lamentably weak that she subjects herself to the curse pronounced but a few moments before; consenting, as in a moment, to marry the man on whose future wife she had called down all the wrath of heaven. Yet her complacency is founded on no real affection, for we find her presently leagued with his direst foes. We must attribute her rapid change of purpose to her own natural vacillation combined with the consummate persuasiveness of Richard, and even without supposing him to have possessed any mesmeric influence over her, it will be seen that the position, though unlikely, is by no means impossible. And that the poet realised the existence of some wonderfully attractive power in Richard, which would justify a scene such as this, is proved by the introduction of a parallel scene towards the close of the play, where, by very similar means to those previously employed, Richard succeeds in persuading Elizabeth to give him her daughter for his wife. But there are two important elements in this latter scene which are wanting in the former: Elizabeth's fear of Richard, and her own dissimulation; for her daughter, it must be remembered, is already affianced to Richmond, and the mother only proposes to fall back on Richard if all else should fail.

Still the poet is not satisfied that the combination of

his characters is strong enough to counterbalance the extraordinary nature of the hero, if we may call him so. He brings, therefore, before us an even more forcible antithesis. In Margaret only we have a character point by point the complement to that of Richard's: his hypocrisy to her regardless openness of speech; to his bloodthirstiness, her carelessness of death; to his biting sarcasm, her passionate curses. The idea is boldly conceived of making her who had fallen under the curse of York, heap her curses in turn upon that hated House, and see, sated to the full, her passionate desire for revenge. Shakspeare has often been censured for the exaggeration and repetition of her curses, and they have been unfavourably contrasted with the curse of the aged Duchess of York in Act IV, Sc. iv. But this very exaggeration and repetition have their purpose in the development of the poet's idea. He wishes to bring out the fact that the more secret are men's crimes the more visible and notorious is the punishment that overtakes them, and the longer it is delayed the more terrible is the vengeance. Thus we see the objects of Margaret's curses destroyed one by one, while those that are left live on in fancied security, until the worst and most hated of them all is lost in a storm of ignominy, and Margaret's dreadful prophecy is fulfilled in all its direst forebodings.

E. D. BEWLEY.

THE END.

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It has been unfortunately impossible to recover the lists of the Society in anything like completeness for the years preceding 1874. It seemed better not to attempt an imperfect record. From 1862 therefore to 1874 at present "the rest is silence." We cannot and dare not look to a second issue of this little work, yet, in case we should be so fortunate, may we venture to ask that old Members will help us to supply this gap in our records before the end of the present year.—Ed.

Note to page 124.

The Editor in correction of the writer.

No ! in the absence of books and references, the writer has given the reins to a fanciful recollection of allusions to Shakspeare's acting. There is nothing to support the suggestion that he impersonated Lear, except the tradition that he was fond of the part of a "King." The entire passage must be accepted as "a *melancholy* of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplations of my travels." It is, however, noteworthy that contemporaries seemed to have measured Shakspeare now and again more by the standard of the actor than the poet, and with approval.

C. H. H.

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